



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

**Wednesday, August 20, 2025
3:00 PM**

Board Members Present: Gretchen Knauff, Chris Blake, Melissa Cullen-Carter, Farrah Garland, Michelle Johnson, Corey Lee, Mark Linabury, Rich Luby, Jaclyn Pinney, Darrell Ruopp, Melissa Thompson

Board Members Absent: George Michna*, Carmen Correa-Rios, Kim Smith, Ron Sparks, Emily Zambrello

***Denotes non-voting member.**

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

Guests: Sharon Heddle, Executive Director - Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut (DNEC)

ACTION	AGENDA ITEM
Call to Order	The meeting was called to Order at 3:06 pm - Quorum established.
President’s Remarks	Gretchen Knauff welcomed attendees and offered opening remarks before beginning the agenda.
Good News	Gretchen encouraged everyone at the meeting to share new and good news. Board members shared positive updates, including personal and professional highlights. Members expressed excitement about upcoming opportunities and recent accomplishments within their organizations and communities.
Public Comment	There was no public comment.
Minutes from July 16, 2025	Motion to accept the minutes by Corey Lee. Melissa Thompson seconded. ACTION: The minutes were approved. Farrah Garland abstained.
Treasurer’s Report	Mark Linabury presented the Financial Report Summary for the period ending July 31, 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CT SILC’s financial position at the end of July 2025 remains strong. • The bank account has been reconciled through July 31, 2025, without any issues. • Given current uncertainties in federal funding, the Board and staff remain cautious in spending. No formal vote required for the Treasurer’s Report.
Motion to Amend Agenda	A request was made to modify the agenda to move the NCIL conference report forward. At the Chair’s request, and without objection, the agenda was rearranged to take NCIL Conference Reports immediately before the Executive Director’s Report so Melissa Cullen-Carter could present before a 4:00 PM appointment. No objections; so ordered.
NCIL Conference Report:	Molly Cole, Melissa Cullen-Carter, and Carmen Correa-Rios attended the Level-UP 2025 NCIL conference. Molly Cole and Melissa Cullen-Carter shared updates; Carmen Correa-Rios was unable to attend today’s meeting, but notes were



	<p>shared on her behalf).</p> <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop PowerPoints and Hill-visit booklet available on the NCIL website. <p>Rally / ADA Celebration (highlights): Melissa (first-time attendee): Rally felt tangible/empowering; many states represented with signs; long procession with police support. Attended a Wisconsin workshop on I&R/data capture relevant to her center.</p> <p>Workshops & Takeaways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisconsin sessions on I&R by town and an equitable funding “formulary” (defining usable land / population distribution) stood out. • AI in human services was more prevalent this year; warrants increased focus. <p>Hill Visits / Federal Outlook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visited Senators Blumenthal & Murphy’s offices; contacts exchanged. • Message: no block grants; level funding (same as prior year). • Senate signaled level funding; House (expected by Sept 1) anticipated to be less favorable. Must reconcile before Oct 1 to avoid shutdown, outcome uncertain.
<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: Waiting for fourth quarter payment from the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) that was billed in July. Our amended Program Performance Report (PPR) was accepted. Waiting for amended contract from ADS to be sent over to sign. Our annual report to the Secretary of State has been filed. This is an annual requirement from the Secretary of State to verify you are an active non-profit. The filing fee is \$50. • Projects: The CT Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance (CCDLA) meetings will be meeting every other week starting Friday, September 12th, from 12-1 PM. We had a successful 35th Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Commemoration on July 30, 2025, at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Over 150 people attended. It was very well received. Also, attendees were able to try out the accessible voting machine. CT-N covered the event that can be seen at: https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=25151 . Continuing to work on language for the reauthorization of the Rehab Act. Continuing to attend weekly calls with national SILC directors along with NCIL regional and national calls. • Supported Decision Making (SDM): The SDM Policy Group is working hard on a legislative strategy for the next session to get this bill passed. The group continues to work on the SDM toolkit and website. They are also planning a second legislative informational hearing at the LOB on November 13th, Room 2C, 10 to 11.30 AM, and will be hybrid.



	<p>Discussion was had about a probate hearing in Newington for a young girl and how the probate judge was wanting to get more information on SDM and thought it was a great idea for her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rev-Up: Beginning work on Rev-Up. That is our Register, Educate, and Vote initiative. September is Disability Voting Rights month. Our first Rev-Up meeting is this Friday. The plan is to do events starting September and into the fall. Farrah Garland and Michelle Johnson asked to join the team. <p>There was additional discussion on the accessible voting machines not being out during referendums and it was pointed out that they should be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging and Disability: Continuing work on aging and disability initiatives including the planning committee for the Aging and Disability Summit. The Aging and Disability Summit will take place on October 6, 2025, at the Aqua Turf. Alison Barkoff will be the recipient of the Judith Stein award this year. • Webinars and Training: We are doing a CIL staff training on September 23, 2025, on emergency prep at Red Cross office in Uncasville. • Katie Beckett Waiver: Molly Cole provided a brief update on the Katie Beckett waiver and the five-year wait issue. She noted that Connecticut Insider published a story on the waiver. Molly was interviewed for the piece, along with several families who served on the committee. The article opens with the story of a young girl who died while waiting to get on the waiver this past year and closes with Molly’s account of her daughter’s experience on the waiver. The CT Insider link: CT family fights so children don't die while on Medicaid waitlist.
<p>Status of Office Space</p>	<p>CT SILC rents a small office at the Area Agency on Aging for \$333 per month. Alternatives such as a storage unit, insurance, additional shelving, and a P.O. Box were explored. After review by the Executive Committee, it was determined the move was not cost-effective, and the current arrangement will continue.</p>
<p>Status of Federal Government and CT SILC Contingency Budgeting/SPIL</p>	<p>Report: Molly Cole shared an update. Our Hill message was no block grants and level funding the same as last year. The Senate Budget Committee signaled support for level funding. The House budget, expected around September 1, was likely to be less favorable. Both chambers still need to pass their bills, reconcile differences, and get a final measure to the President before October 1 to avoid a shutdown. A continuing resolution is likely. For CT SILC, we expect some state (ADS) funding and a contract by the end of September. I&E funds continue, and we are applying for other grants, although competition is high. Molly is working on some contingency budgets and will bring them forward when there is clearer federal guidance. In the meantime, we will spend carefully, protect reserves, and, if needed, scale back and work with partners to keep core work moving.</p> <p>Discussion: Members noted that Medicaid and other programs may face cuts, which could</p>



	<p>make things harder for CILs. The Board discussed pairing advocacy with practical help, such as showing people how to handle new requirements like reapplications and paperwork and keeping these issues in front of voters through the midterms. Rich Luby encouraged us to plan as if federal funds do not arrive, so we are ready either way.</p>
<p>Annual Meeting Location: UCEDD, Farmington, CT. Discussion Award Recipients: Legislator Award and Daria Smith Advocacy Award</p>	<p>The Annual Meeting will be held at the UCEDD in Farmington, CT, from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM. A board-only lunch will be held from 12:00 to 1:00 PM, followed by the public meeting from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Catering is planned through Beanz & Company.</p> <p>To reduce costs, the Board agreed to scale back from a larger event. Award discussions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislator Award – nominees to be finalized. - Daria Smith Advocacy Award – nominees to be finalized. <p>ACTION: Board members were given an opportunity to bring forth any other nominees by Wednesday, August 27. If there were further nominees, the board would vote Friday, August 29.</p>
<p>Decision on Wheelchair Repair Committee</p>	<p>Corey Lee said the split with the Wheelchair Repair Coalition was amicable and the coalition wishes to operate independently. Molly Cole said SILC remains interested in updates on wheelchair repair and, if resources allow, future support can be considered.</p> <p>Motion by Corey Lee, second by Michelle Johnson, to dissolve the Wheelchair Repair Committee as a CT SILC committee.</p> <p>ACTION: Motion approved unanimously.</p>
<p>Committee Reports</p>	<p>SPIL COMMITTEE – Chris Blake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to start the next SPIL by late February/early March. • Begin survey design and outreach planning this winter. • Process steps: conduct a needs assessment; gather community input; compile data; draft the plan; post for public comment. • Decide whether to add focus groups and/or public forums in addition to the survey. • Aim the survey primarily at people with disabilities seeking to live independently so the results are not skewed by caregiver/parent responses. • Include a way for respondents to identify their role so results can be reported by group (people with disabilities vs. others). • Review outreach expectations, including what “paper outreach” should look like for each Center. • Use accessible, targeted outreach (plain language, print options where needed, right channels). <p>DATA TECH COMMITTEE – Michele DuBois</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CILs continue work standardizing how we capture and report goal data. • PPR definitions are subjective and are used differently across the CILs.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We agreed to review each PPR measure one by one, adopt shared definitions, add clear examples, and set firm rules going forward. • We will create training and tip sheets, so CILs apply the data the same way. • Our goal is consistent data and a clearer, statewide story about outcomes. • We acknowledged that people and situations are unique, which makes selecting goals hard (for example, is the real goal getting a job, with a ramp as one step, or is the goal the ramp itself?). • We will separate short-term and long-term goals and tie each goal back to independence. • We recognized wide inconsistency in disability categories and definitions across agencies and sources, and we will align our approach within CT. • Collaboration among centers is increasing, with more sharing of tools, training, and expertise, and more voices at the table. • Progress is slower than we would like because staff are balancing this work with direct services, but the group agrees we are on the right path. • We are planning a SILC Connect webinar on September 16 to share the CT SILC/CIL data journey, including how we got here, successes, steps, and challenges.
<p>New Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly shared a conference on including people with disabilities in business on September 25 at the Accessible Prospect Theater in Ridgefield. She will circulate the flyer; CT SILC will promote it on Facebook and through its mailing list. Suzanne Terrio will interpret at the event. • Recruitment Committee: Daryl asked about the committee’s status. Molly noted the committee needs to convene. Work has been paused due to funding uncertainty, but the committee should review pending items and vacancies and continue recruiting despite the caveat about the uncertain outlook.
<p>Announcements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Adaptive Sports & Recreation Day will be held on Saturday, September 6, 9:00–12:00, at Quinnipiac University’s North Haven campus, in partnership with the Connecticut Spinal Cord Injury Association. CT SILC will staff a table. • The “Super Adaptables” podcast, a More Than Walking podcast cohosted by Corey Lee, is focusing this month on disaster relief and emergency preparedness. Members are encouraged to listen and share. • The next board meeting will be in person in Farmington next month. Transportation and other accommodations are available. Forms will be on site; contact Molly if you need assistance in advance.
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Motion to adjourn by Michelle Johnson; second by Mark Linabury. Adopted unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:42 PM</p>