



**Washington
Statewide
Independent
Living Council**

Washington Statewide Independent Living Council

July 2026

Quarterly Meeting

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Accessibility Statement

We are working to make our WASILC Quarterly Meeting accessible in the following ways: ASL interpreting; screen readable agenda and director's report; presentation slides with high color contrast; non serif fonts size 14 and larger; line spacing size 1.5 and larger; reading aloud of all content appearing on the screen, including image and table descriptions; and ten to fifteen minute breaks, for every 2 hours of meeting time. We will not go faster to get through materials and agenda items, and we will not rely solely on the chat for all group communication. We will invite cameras on and off as needed for accessibility. We will check in with the group about accessibility practices as we go along. We truly welcome all feedback about accessible WASILC events and materials!



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Declaración de Accesibilidad

Estamos trabajando para hacer que nuestra reunión trimestral de WASILC sea accesible de las siguientes maneras: interpretación en ASL; agenda y informe del director legibles en pantalla; diapositivas de presentación con alto contraste de color; fuentes sin serifas de tamaño 14 o mayor; interlineado de tamaño 1.5 o mayor; lectura en voz alta de todo el contenido que aparezca en la pantalla, incluyendo descripciones de imágenes y tablas; y pausas de diez a quince minutos, por cada 2 horas de tiempo de reunión. No aceleraremos el paso para completar los materiales y los temas de la agenda, y no dependeremos únicamente del chat para toda la comunicación grupal. Invitaremos a encender y apagar las cámaras según sea necesario para la accesibilidad.

Consultaremos con el grupo sobre las prácticas de accesibilidad a medida que avancemos. ¡Realmente damos la bienvenida a todos los comentarios sobre eventos y materiales accesibles de WASILC!



**Washington
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WASILC July 2026 Quarterly Meeting

Meeting Agenda:

Thursday, July 9th, 2026

9a.m. – 4p.m.

9:00 to 9:45am

- Welcome & Statement on Accessibility- Kimberly Meck
- Roll Call- Courtney Williams
- Agenda Approval- Kimberly Meck
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR): Pablo Villarreal, Interim Director
 - Topic: Updates on statewide vocational rehabilitation initiatives, structural goals, and inter-agency data collaboration opportunities.
- Approval of April 2026 meeting minutes – Kimberly Meck
- Executive Director's Report: Courtney Williams, MPA
 - Statewide Outreach & Training

- RDA Mapping Project Request
- The Reality of CIEP & Future Mitigation
- Federal & National Preparation: NCIL 2026
- Council Review Session: Group study and alignment on legislative talking points and federal advocacy priorities ahead of the upcoming National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- Treasurers Report – Tony Hester

9:45 to 10:00am Public Comment

10:00 to 10:15am Break

10:15 to 12:00pm Client Assistant Program and Standing Committee Report Outs

- Client Assistance Program (CAP): Jen Bean, Client Assistance Program (CAP)
 - Topic: CAP Statewide Report and Systemic Advocacy Updates
- Collation on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP): Jim House
- Executive Committee: Kimberly Meck
- Legislative Committee: Co-Chairs Tony Hester and Sawyer Sterns
- Education and Outreach Committee: Co-Chairs Dion Graham and Hannah Adira
- Youth and Young Adult Committee: Chair Josie Garcia

12:00pm to 1pm Lunch

1:00 to 2:00pm SPIL Feedback Session

2:00 to 2:15pm Break

2:15 to 3:00pm Partner Reports

- Department of Services for the Blind- Tricia Eyerly
- Washington State Rehabilitation Council- Shelby Satko
- Washington State Governors Council on Disabilities- Elizabeth Gordon

3:00 to 3:45pm Center for Independent Living (CIL) Reports

- Mark Leeper, Executive Director, Disability Action Center (DAC)
- Erin Farrier, Program Director, Disability Action Center North East (DAC NEW)
- Faith Brown, Executive Director, Center for Independence (CFI)
- Mayra Colazo, Executive Director, Central Washington Disability Resources (CWDR)
- Kimberly Meck, Executive Director, Disability Empowerment Center (DEC)

3:45pm to 4:00pm 2027 Quarterly meeting schedule

4:00pm Adjourn



DVR Interim Director Updates Pablo Villarreal

Who is Pablo?

- 23 years of public service at DVR
- Rehabilitation Tech and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor from 2003-2009
- Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor from 2009-2020
- Region 1 Administrator from 2020-2023
- Assistant Director, Workforce and Youth 2023-2026

Vision for DVR

- Focus on staff
- Participant success
- Employer engagement
- Collaborate with partner agencies

Organizational Changes due to interim role

- Melinda Bocci, Transition Program Manager
- Sam Blazina, Pre-ETS program Manager
- Jeannine Chandler, Business Relations Manager
- Larissa Wulfekuhle, Administrative Assistant

National and Statewide issues affecting VR

- Presidents Budget and proposed cuts to Client Assistance program and Supported employment
- RSA Placement
- CCER Closure Impacts
- Tribal VR relationships

Order of Selection updates

- DVR began releasing participant names from the waitlist June 9th.

Performance:

- Continue Monthly Business Reviews with statewide leadership
- Focus on WIOA measures- Progress and gaps
- Build capacity in Data and Analytics team, to include analytics for students as well as adult participants.
- WIOA Measures – negotiated rates/current state

Washington – Final Negotiated Levels

Indicator	PY2026 State Expected Level	PY2026 Proposed Negotiated Level	PY2027 State Expected Level	PY2027 Proposed Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	48.00%	48.00%	48.00%	48.10%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	45.00%	45.00%	45.00%	45.10%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,400	\$4,400	\$4,400	\$4,500
Credential Attainment Rate	30.00%	34.00%	30.00%	35.00%
Measurable Skill Gains	45.60%	46.00%	45.60%	47.00%

Negotiated levels of performance for PY2026 and PY 2027

Workforce Board

- Representation – DVR will continue to represent DSHS on the Workforce Education and Training Board (WTB).

Priority of Service update

- DVR has five priority of service categories.
- RSA has approved the DVR updated State Plan on the condition that DVR will update the Priority of Service Categories to align with federal regulations and the Rehab Act by end of Program Year 2027.
- This means that DVR will return to three priority of service categories. No significant Disability (NSD), Significant Disability (SD) and Most Significant Disability (MSD)



Thank you!

Pablo.Villarreal@dshs.wa.gov



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DRAFT WASILC January Quarterly Meeting

April 16th, 2026

9am To 4pm

Council Members Present:

Dion Graham, Advocate of and for Individuals with Disabilities, Seattle

Kimberly Meck, Center Director Representative, Seattle

Tony Hester, Advocate of and for Individuals with Disabilities, Puyallup

Sue Pniewski, Advocate of and for Individuals with Disabilities, Seattle

Council Staff Present:

Courtney Williams, Executive Director, Washington Statewide
Independent Living Council (WASILC)

Jim House, Disability/AFN Integration Manager, Coalition on Inclusive
Emergency Planning (CIEP)

Rebecca Rodriguez, Executive Assistant, Washington Statewide
Independent Living Council (WASILC)

Guest Presenters:

Tricia Eyerly, Assistant Director, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)

Elizabeth Gordon, Executive Director, Washington State Governors Council on Disabilities (GCDE)

Faith Brown, Executive Director, Center for Independence (CFI)

Mayra Colazo, Executive Director, Central Washington Disability Resources (CWDR)

Mark Leeper, Executive Director, Disability Action Center (DAC)

Erin Ferrier, Program Manager, Disability Action Center Northeast Washington (DACNeW)

Approval of April 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion: I would like to make a motion to approve the April meeting minutes as presented.

First: Toney Hester

Second: Dion Graham

Vote: Favor: All

Opposed: None

APPROVED

Approval of April 2026 Agenda

Motion: I approve the amended changes to the agenda for today.

Edite to agenda: COURTNEY WILLIAMS: There were two others that may have been missed. Instead of me reporting on financials, Dion Graham will be reporting financials. And then we said approval of July minutes, it's

January of 2025. So you might need to put forth a new motion, Kimberly, with those two!

First: Dion Graham

Second: Tony Hester

Vote: Favor: All

Opposed: None

APPROVED

WASILC Budget – Dion Graham

- Operations & Program Expenses
 - Accessibility: \$4,434
 - Interpreters and Translators: \$2,532
 - Meeting Essentials: \$1,902
- Learning & Development: \$4,649
 - Travel: \$2,869
 - National Network Dues: \$1,780
- CIEP Reported Surplus: \$48,374
 - Budget Note: Courtney Williams clarified that this high surplus is temporary and due to DOH billing cycles. The program has not yet been billed for half of the year, but spending remains on target with the allocated budget.
- Spending is roughly \$24,000 per month, which aligns exactly with the target

Executive Director report – Courtney Williams

- Rural Landscape Challenges: 32 out of 39 Washington counties are identified as rural, resulting in significant barriers to transportation, healthcare, and social services.

- National Collaboration: Leadership met with Florida's Executive Director, Beth Meyer, to study and emulate their established foundation and standardized processes for inclusive emergency management.
- Cross-Disability Focus: Initiatives aim to define the cross-disability spectrum and give individuals with lived experience a platform to vocalize their specific needs during emergencies.
- Operational Connection Trainings:
 - Targeted in-person outreach sessions are scheduled across Central and Eastern Washington to meet underserved communities where they are.
 - Designed to partner first responders and emergency management professionals directly with individuals with lived experience to build relationships and mutual awareness.
 - A virtual training session is planned for the future to allow for broader statewide engagement.
- Movement is being driven by collaboration between leadership, Jim House (CIEP program), and council member Susan (Sue), an emergency management expert.
- Council Development & Education
 - Strategic Growth: The council is actively filling vacancies to ensure membership reflects state needs, elevates historically unheard voices, and brings on committed advocates.
 - Washington-Specific Training Cohort: Partnering with *Mechanical* to establish a tailored training plan to clarify roles

and responsibilities between WASILC and the Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

- Core Curriculum Focus: Training modules will focus heavily on:
 - Fiscal oversight
 - Foundations in government
 - SPIL development
 - Advocacy and systems change
- Capacity Rebuilding: Moving past a period of limited operational capacity caused by past leadership transitions and staffing shortages.
- Strategic Planning & Future Vision
 - SPIL vs. Strategic Plan: While the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) serves as the strict, compliance-monitored roadmap, it is difficult to revise.
 - Upcoming Summer Session: A dedicated strategic planning session is planned for the summer months once more council members are formally appointed.
 - Five-Year Forecasting: The strategic plan will act as a flexible, easily pivotable tool to forecast where the organization wants to be in five years, effectively bridging policy with practice.
 - Legislative Focus: The Legislative Committee will leverage this framework to strengthen visibility, accessibility, and direct connections with state decision-makers.
- Council Recruitment & Tribal Partnerships
 - Adopting a "slow and steady" approach to appointing council members to ensure new additions directly reflect Washington's

diverse demographics, possess authentic lived experience, and align with the core mission.

- The council is actively focusing on cultivating, building, and rebuilding relationships with tribal nations.
- Aiming to bring tribal communities to the table as potential council members to ensure the state's varied needs and unique regional variables are fully represented.
- The Strategic Imperative for a Strategic Plan
 - An Organizational First: WASILC has historically never had an independent strategic plan, previously operating primarily under the SPIL.
 - The SPIL: Defines the overarching statewide goals and the baseline metrics for success.
 - The Strategic Plan: Acts as the practical operational guide—the "how we get there"—directing specific day-to-day activities, community outreach, and networking.
- A strategic plan is a living document that can quickly pivot, breathe, and adapt to unexpected crises (such as a national pandemic).
- Written direction provides a measurable value that allows external partners to see where the organization is heading and offer targeted collaboration to strengthen the independent living network.

Public Comment

Shawn Latham: Hello, my name is Shawn Latham. It's good to see some of you again. For those of you that don't know, I'm the Director of Allies in Advocacy, a non-profit technical assistance and education self-advocacy

organization; and I'm also the Policy Coordinator for the Self-Advocates in Leadership Coalition, a coalition working on legislative advocacy; and I'm a former employee at two of your centers, just mostly listening in today to see what's going on.

I have a few things you may want to be aware of. It looks like Home and Community Living Administration is breaking back up into the Developmental Disability Administration and I'm assuming Aging and Long-Term Care Administration. According to Secretary Ramirez and Assistant Secretary Rector, they need to do this to protect themselves from federal issues.

Courtney, I told Bee Rector yesterday at the 50th anniversary to reach out to you. And then second, we, the self-advocates, are going to start a work group on the fourth Thursday at 12:30, looking at how to protect Olmstead in case we see any federal challenges to it. Anyone can join.

Lastly, I will stay Allies in Advocacy will have our annual public meeting on July 7th from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. at the Arc of King County Legacy Office in Sea-Tac. I will leave my contact information in the chat.

Courtney Williams: Thank you for the plug for Ms. Bee Rector. We worked together in the past and we actually had a meeting earlier this year, and she's really about connecting work to both centers for independent living and our mission. I appreciate you.

Kimberly Meck: Thanks, Shawn. I appreciate it. I put a question to you. Is CDAN still around?

Shawn Latham: That's the group I was talking about earlier. It's kind of between DRW and governor's office. They are on a hiatus for another month. They will be back.

Kimberly Meck: So they're between DRW and GCDE.

Courtney Williams: I made an error, Shawn. I'm sorry. Wait, one second. I said that we are not included. Elizabeth, we are included. Those meetings I've attended before virtually. So sorry. I thought it was one group versus another.

Kimberly Meck: Great. I just wanted to repeat what Shawn had said. For those of you who are not aware, CDAN, Cross-Disability Advocacy Network and Shawn mentioned they're on a hiatus for a month. Elizabeth Gordon is with the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues in Employment, and she says if you would like an invitation to the CDAN meeting, let her know and she will add you. And Courtney is admitting she lied. I'm not going to say it was a lie. It was an error.

Courtney Williams: I heard one thing. Anyway, Elizabeth is a wonderful partner and we are included. I have the invites on my calendar. So appreciate you, Elizabeth. Sorry.

Kimberly Meck: Thank you, Shawn. I appreciate that. I look forward to -- I

think I have about 15 different email addresses from you, quite frankly, Shawn. So I would love to get your most latest email address because I think I definitely have some people who would be really interested in that work group.

Shawn Latham: Okay, sounds good.

Kimberly Meck: Awesome. Look forward to hearing from you. So do we have any other public comments? Anything on anybody's mind?

Courtney Williams: It might put somebody on the spot. Krysta, my friend, are you willing to share your message to me? I think everybody needs to hear what you're saying. And if not, that's okay. You can just say Courtney, don't ever put me on the spot again.

Okay, I think it's appropriate. Krysta, are you available to unmute yourself, my friend?

Kimberly Meck: Rebecca, just in case there might be some issues with unmuting, perhaps you might send a request to unmute to Krysta, just in case.

Courtney Williams: Krysta is from the Cascade yeah Deaf Nation in Washington. And so she's supporting -- that group supports our Deaf and Deaf-plus community, including the BIPOC Deaf community. And it's a group that we need to learn more from, and so she's welcoming the

opportunity for our council to meet because, again, that's a population we're needing to get to know. So I appreciate partners like Krysta.

She thumb's up, so she's okay with me saying it. I figured you would be, because we want to promote the work that you're doing and I wanted to make sure we said that out loud. So thank you for thinking of us. Thank you for joining, and it's something that we will follow up with. Appreciate you.

Kimberly Meck: Thank you very much, Krysta. Always looking to find good partners. So this is Kimberly. And since it's public comment time, I will just share when most of you joined, Courtney and I were talking about something, and it's actually related to transportation. I just tie this briefly to the State Plan for Independent Living because often when we do our Community Listening Sessions regarding what the community feels that we should be working on in the SPIL, we hear several key things that come up that we don't have the ability to control a lot of.

There's advocacy that we can do with these topics, but there's not a lot actually physically that we can do. And those are housing and transportation. I am part of -- in my other job, I am part of the Find a Ride Advisory Group. If you're not aware of that, it has a ton of really cool things that has to do with the ability to find transportation in Pierce, King, Snohomish counties, using all of the transportation resources.

We had a presentation yesterday from a group of people from Oregon regarding some dataset. It kind of was Greek to me and it kind of went in one year and out the other, but it stuck enough for me to say I need to

introduce Courtney to these people. The dataset is basically use of public transportation options. It's not rider maps or anything like that. It's actually use data of all the transportation options on a statewide level, and they used it in Oregon to do quite a bit of transportation planning.

The Oregon legislature actually commissioned some of the work to be done to identify alternative transportation options. And I just thought it would be amazing to connect Courtney to that group to find out more about how it's being used. I know there's a project being done in Washington. I don't have a lot of details on it.

But Courtney, I know that Dean Sydnor, I believe you know him, he's actually connected to that group as well and said that he would be happy to facilitate an introduction. So I'm really excited because data is what makes the world go round and it's what helps people plan and decide on things. And so it may mean that we have an opportunity to actually do more education about the lack of transportation in some of our transportation deserts, and specific transportation options, also.

Courtney Williams: Thank you, Kimberly. You chair of the Leg Committee, so these are the kind of connections and opportunities that the Legislative and Advocacy Committee can help elevate these issues to our decision-makers. Because again, they don't often hear from us.

Now, we partner greatly with Centers for Independent Living when it comes to our legislative advocacy. But we're also an independent council, so things that our community is seeing is something that we want to make sure we're elevating. So you'll hear more about the Legislative Committee.

Hopefully you're engaging and hopefully you can engage because there's a lot of exciting things in the coming year. Dion?

Dion Graham: Yeah. This is Dion. Interesting that this subject comes up, because in the picture back ground that you see me, that was a picture taken in Detroit from about 2015-ish. And while I was there, I was at the Blacks in Government Conference, and they were talking about -- there was one session that spoke about combining transportation agencies all within an app. And this would include agencies like Uber, Lyft, can Para transit.

So all a person would have to do, disability or not disability, is log into this app to see what type of services are available in the area, what the costs are for each, which ones are connected. I don't know what happened to that, but I would be very curious if this group may be involved in similar discussions. And if so, or even if not, I would like to be part of that as well.

Kimberly Meck: Thanks, Dion. I appreciate that. What you're talking about sounds very similar to the Find a Ride project. I posted a web page for chat for anybody who's interested in it. This group got a significant project grant to be able to do all of this. And the beauty of it all is it's fully accessible. If you ever have an accessibility issue, you just bring it up to them and they work to try and fix it.

Right now, it's only for Pierce, King and Snohomish, but the hope would be that at some point it could get bigger. But we're definitely going to note your name down as a volunteer to participate in any activities that we

come up with for that.

Dion Graham: Sounds good.

Kimberly Meck: Do we have any additional public comment? Hearing none, seeing no indications of, we will close public comment period. I do want to remind people that just because we have a public comment period during our SILC meetings, that's not the only time we want to hear from you. You can go to our web page and find all of our contact information, including a phone number if you would like to talk verbally to Courtney.

She will welcome any comments, questions, suggestions. And we will respond back to them. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional information you would like to share with us.

Standing Committee Report Out

Executive Committee- Kimberly Meck, Chair

- The executive committee has been reduced to just two active members following a recent departure.
- Dr. Summers has stepped down from her roles as council treasurer and WASILC member due to personal reasons.
- The council is currently operating at a minimized capacity with only four active members.
- **Ex-Officio Leadership Updates:**
 - Dana Phelps from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) remains the active ex-officio member, though she was

recently appointed as the interim Assistant Secretary for DSHS. The council is awaiting formal notice on whether this promotion will impact her role with WASILC.

- With only four active members, the council currently holds five vacant voting positions.
- Two candidates have successfully completed their official applications, cleared the governor's office vetting process, and been reviewed by the executive committee:
 - Josie Garcia
 - Leslie Erickson
 - The SILC executive committee feels confident in both candidates and is prepared to formally recommend them to the governor's office for official appointment.

Motion: I would take a motion from Council to approve moving those individuals' names forward to the governor's office for appointment official appointment to WASILC.

First: Tony Hester **Second:** Dion Graham

Vote: Favor: All **Opposed:** None **APPROVED**

- Courtney Williams: There if you remember we got advance, we moved faster than we thought. The governor Council or the governor's office have already authorized their appointment so Kimberly, we could ratify this vote to be a vote on improving them as councilmembers.

Motion: I make a motion to approve Leslie and Josie to the council.

First: Dion Graham **Second:** Tony Hester

Vote: Favor: All **Opposed:** None **APPROVED**

Motion: I motion to appoint Tony for the remainder of this term as the secretary for WASILC.

First: Sue Pniewski **Second:** Dion Graham

Vote: Favor: All **Opposed:** None **APPROVED**

Education & Outreach – Dion Graham & Hannah Adira

- The committee is currently small, consisting of only two active members, actively seeking new members to join
- Updated all of WASILC's core promotional and informational materials, including the official website, brochures, and informational handouts.
- Overhauled and updated the training and orientation materials used to welcome newly appointed council members.
- Upcoming Cross-Disability Virtual Panel, hosting a virtual cross-disability panel scheduled for next week.
 - Bringing together community leaders, legislators, agency partners, and community members to educate them on the realities of living independently in Washington.
- Hannah emphasized that the panel will go beyond just storytelling by highlighting specific life-pack and self-advocacy skills.
- Strategic Value: Bridging Lived Experience with Policy

Youth & Young Adult – Courtney Williams & Josie Garcia

- Urgent request for council members to join this committee, emphasizing that youth involvement directly impacts and intersects with all other focus areas, including education, outreach, and legislative advocacy.
- Actively seeking creative ideas, strategies, and feedback on how to effectively engage the younger generation.

- ESD Partnership Strategy: To find the most direct route to Washington's youth, the committee bypassed individual school outreach and partnered with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and regional Educational Service Districts (ESDs).
- The committee has established two clear, specific asks for its educational partners:
 - Recruiting youth to participate actively within WASILC committees.
 - Positioning young advocates to be formally appointed to the full statewide Council.

Legislative & Policy Committee – Kimberly Meck & Tony Hester

- Legislative Advocacy Day 2027 Planning
- WASILC is establishing an independent advocacy day specifically tailored to independent living issues, carving out its own space alongside other disability advocacy groups.
- The event is officially scheduled for **April 2nd** during the state's next long legislative session. The team has already reserved the Capitol Rotunda and the Columbia Room in Olympia.
- Hybrid Engagement Model
- The Legislative Committee is developing an "Advocacy 101" training curriculum to demystify the legislative process for consumers.
 - The training will place a heavy emphasis on personal storytelling, teaching advocates how to craft quick, high-impact pitches that tie civil rights and legal issues directly to the human impact of policies.

- The committee will establish unified talking points to ensure all legislative meetings are structured, clear, and relevant to the council's broader mission.
- WASILC will align its educational messaging with the Centers for Independent Living (CILs), who contract with professional lobbyists. This structural partnership ensures that community-driven stories are backed up by formal legislative asks made by CIL lobbyists.

State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) – Kimbelry Meck, Chair

- The 2027–2030 Cycle: SPIL plans are drafted every few years. The upcoming submission is due to federal regulators in July 2027, and it will govern operations from October 1, 2027, through September 30, 2030.
- The active SPIL document is hosted publicly on the WASILC website, and digital copies can be requested directly via email from Executive Director Courtney Williams.
- The dedicated SPIL Committee is composed of:
 - Directors from the statewide Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
 - WASILC staff members
 - Two active council members (including the speaker)
- The committee is actively seeking one additional council member to join. Courtney Williams will be reaching out to newly appointed members to gauge their interest and alignment with the committee's scope.

- The committee is designing a comprehensive statewide survey to capture critical, data-driven feedback from the disability community regarding current issue areas.
- WASILC will host structured community meetings, partner listening sessions, and open forum listening sessions to inform the initial drafts.
- Early 2027 is earmarked for formal draft consolidation. These initial drafts will be brought before the full SILC for structural review and subsequently posted for a public comment period.
- The committee has established a strict, phased timeline to track benchmarks and ensure on-time submission.

Program Reports

Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP) – Jim House

- **CIEP After Action Report (AAR) & Disaster Review**
 - The report represents three months of collaborative work reviewing the state's emergency response to the December Washington flooding, specifically evaluating Access and Functional Needs (AFN).
 - The full document spans over 100 pages with dense categories, but it features a plain-language summary for easier reading. It will be shared as a Google Doc link, with Word documents available upon request for accessibility.
 - The AAR is currently a working document open to further comments, additions, and updates from the council.

- The report utilizes the comprehensive **CMIST** framework to categorize gaps in the flood response:
 - **Communication (C):** Critically highlighted the absence of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters during urgent television news broadcasts, a systemic issue that has since been brought directly to the Governor's Office.
 - **Maintaining Health (M) & Independence (I):** Examined the long remediation timelines and processes required for individuals with disabilities to safely return to independent living environments after their homes sustain flood damage.
 - **Safety, Support, & Security (S):** Identified severe operational gaps in emergency staffing activations. Specifically, council emergency expert Sue Newski was not deployed when needed because her direct supervisor was on maternity leave, leaving no active protocol to bypass the bottleneck and call her up.
 - **Transportation (T):** Noted that transportation barriers severely impacted the community's ability to flee during critical evacuation orders—a localized threat that occurred within a single block of the speaker's own home.
- **Regional Training Rollouts:** Findings from the report are directly informing the design of the upcoming community outreach and emergency management trainings scheduled for Yakima and Spokane.
- **Power Backup Pilot Program:** The Coalition for Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP) is moving forward with a testing pilot

project focused on electrical power backup systems for durable medical equipment.

Partner Updates

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation- Dana Phelps

- See report

Department of Services for the Blind- Tricia Eyerly

- The Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) is finalizing an update to its state plan. Submission is briefly delayed to refine specific fiscal information, after which the updated plan will be posted and shared publicly.
- Working closely with the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to prepare the agency to move to an "order of selection" system within the next year due to resource constraints.
- This administrative shift will affect the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program but will **not** interrupt the independent living programs. Services for older and younger blind individuals will continue without requiring waitlists.
- DSB Executive Director Michael and DVR leadership recently attended the national consortium conference in Washington, D.C., participating in direct advocacy visits on The Hill.
- During a meeting with Senator Patty Murray's office, the team discovered one of the Senator's legislative aides was a former DSB vocational rehabilitation customer.

- Independent Living Program Manager Kim Canaan is collaborating with the Older Individuals who are Blind Technical Assistance Center (OIB-TAC) to launch a specialized virtual instruction program in June.
 - The pilot will provide group-based virtual training for routine and easily described adaptive independent living skills, allowing DSB to reach more people simultaneously.
 - This virtual model was designed to chip away at persistent provider and trainer shortages that have caused service waitlists in King and Snohomish counties, with the ultimate goal of expanding access statewide.

Washington State Rehabilitation Council- Shelby Satko

- See report

Washington State Governors Council on Disabilities- Elizabeth Gordon

- Following a heavy legislative session, efforts shifted heavily toward long-term organizational capacity projects.
- The commission managed an unusually high number of openings this year, making recruitment a lengthy process. While many strong applicants were existing state employees, the group actively re-evaluated proposals to ensure the commission maintained a balanced community perspective without an overabundance of state staff.
- Because a high number of open seats left fewer members available to carry out project work, several initiatives fell slightly behind schedule.

- New members are expected to be fully seated and onboarded by mid-May, restoring the committee to full operational capacity.
- Despite initial uncertainty regarding funding availability, the group successfully awarded \$100,000 in Accessible Communities funds across four distinct proposals. Contracts with the respective counties are currently being finalized. These grass-roots, targeted grants pair local counties directly with people with disabilities to identify and repair critical localized infrastructure and access barriers.
- Impact Examples:
 - Outdoor Recreation: Funded specialized beach and trail-accessible wheelchairs to enhance park inclusion.
 - Community Spaces: Funded physical path improvements at a dog park, ensuring handlers with disabilities can navigate the space alongside their peers.
- The traditional six-day overnight youth camp is being phased out due to persistent volunteer staffing shortages and a lack of on-site personnel.
- The primary focus this year is shifting toward building a dedicated Youth Council to institutionalize direct "Youth Voice" within the commission's work.
- The council will partner closely with the legislative action youth committee (*acronym pending final verification*) to foster advocacy and self-advocacy skills.
- The committee intends to align with peer partners, with the goal of hosting a public listening session or an initial formal meeting by the end of the calendar year.

- Members are actively building out self-advocacy and legal literacy resources to support the community through volatile shifts in federal resource consistency. Plans include an informal training series featuring lived-experience storytelling and targeted inclusion fact sheets.
- The legislative subcommittee is reviewing its framework to shift from a reactive stance toward an early, values-based system. This will allow the committee to establish legislative priorities and multi-agency partnerships well ahead of the session, though members will maintain the flexibility to react to unexpected bills.
- Due to state travel freezes, the typical in-person rural community outreach events are being reimaged. The team is collaborating with accessible communities subcommittees to build highly targeted, virtual conversation spaces.
- Annual October Employer Awards on hiatus due to travel restrictions, efforts have shifted entirely toward sustainable economic advancement. The team published a *Know Your Rights* discrimination guide and is pivoting conversations away from entry-level positions toward securing higher-paying, career-track employment.
- A recently departing member is leading a targeted initiative to address evening and after-hours specialized transit shortages, removing a major employment barrier for shift workers and individuals who prefer or need night schedules.
- Long-term collaborative work on the Executive Order 24-05 steering committee has reached major launch milestones.

- The mandatory training module focused on *Creating a Welcoming Environment for People with Disabilities* has officially launched across state government. Rooted deeply in disability justice principles, the curriculum heavily featured the design input and review of advocates with lived experience.
- A second required module covering the structural rules of *Reasonable Accommodations* will launch within the next few weeks. This training will be an annual, repeatable requirement for all supervisors to reinforce that accommodations are a legal right rather than a special request.
- Broader partnership efforts—including the Office of Equity, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), DVR, and the WSRC—are actively focusing on structural application and navigation reforms to make entering state employment significantly easier for candidates with disabilities.

CIL Updates

Mark Leeper, Executive Director, Disability Action Center (DAC)

- Mirroring the deep infrastructure gaps found in Northeastern Washington, Southeastern Washington counties face a persistent lack of reliable public transit.
- The Council on Aging and Human Services—which operated a robust regional transit service out of Colfax, Washington—recently collapsed due to a series of institutional misfortunes. The sudden closure completely dismantled regional transit networks, leaving the general

public, older adults, and individuals with disabilities completely stranded across Whitman and Garfield counties, as well as parts of North-Central Idaho.

- To prevent a total service vacuum, the center originally authorized a \$20,000 vehicle matching loan. Because the funds were ultimately not utilized for a vehicle match, the structure was shifted to a \$5,000 expenditure to purchase three specific, multi-passenger transit vehicles registered directly in Idaho.
- Following the service collapse, the center is working aggressively to reallocate these existing vehicles so they can be put back into rotation, helping cross-border and rural residents reach essential destinations.
- Requests for proposals (RFPs) have officially been distributed to identify a new transit provider willing to pick up and restart operations on the Idaho side of the border.
- Yakima-based transit provider People for People has officially expanded operations into the impacted Washington counties, using available funding to rebuild the lost routes as quickly as possible.
- The primary operational focus is restoring transit routes into the Spokane area, which serves as the region's central urban hub for critical medical appointments, specialized healthcare, and essential services.
- **Prohibitive Commercial Alternatives:** Restoring these subsidized community routes remains an urgent priority due to the exorbitant cost of private alternatives

Erin Farrier, Program Director, Disability Action Center North East (DAC NEW)

- Disability Action Center NW (DAC NW) serves a massive, predominantly rural territory spanning
- Outside of the Spokane Transit Authority (STA), the region lacks robust public transportation—especially heading north—making it incredibly difficult for rural residents to travel into the central hub to access vital services.
- Many northern communities completely lack reliable internet and cellular service. Combined with the shift toward online applications, this creates a massive barrier for individuals trying to secure basic state and federal assistance.
- Driven by an influx of community requests, DAC NW is building out a specialized wheelchair ramp program for the northeast corner of the state. The critical need for home access infrastructure spiked dramatically following regional wildfires, prompting calls from partners like the American Red Cross to help displaced residents safely return to family homes.
- Without a centralized regional medical equipment loan closet, the center operates as a vital resource bridge. Staff coordinate with local food banks, nonprofits, and agencies to track down and distribute essential gear, including:
 - Manual wheelchairs, mobility scooters, and specialized lifting beds.

- Low-cost or donated laptops, paired with direct staff navigation support so clients can successfully apply for online services like SSDI and food stamps.
- Utilizing the Roll20 digital platform, this thriving Saturday peer group serves as a powerful isolation-breaker for youth and individuals from St. Luke's Rehabilitation Medical Center who face barriers to attending in-person social gatherings.
- A highly secure, moderated Discord space for youth and young adults (ages 13–24) to share resources, ask questions, and chat safely. The platform utilizes a mandatory registration link to prevent unwanted guests and offer peace of mind to parents.
- **Accessible Fishing Peer Group:** Returning for the season as temperatures warm up, this group organizes outings to fully accessible fishing locations across the region, including expansion sites north of the STA boundary and into Moses Lake.
 - A partnership with Cabela's secured \$500 in donated fishing equipment, including adaptive gear for participants who cannot use traditional rods.
 - Thanks to a unique group license provided by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, participants can fish entirely for free without needing an individual license. This organizational waiver also allows members from DAC NW's Idaho offices to fish across the Washington border.
- Staff recently kicked off rural resource deployments with a successful turnout in Cusick—the headquarters of the Kalispel Tribe of Indians. Similar mobile community health events featuring pop-up clinics,

vaccines, food trucks, and a DSHS mobile unit will continue throughout the spring and summer.

- Partnering with the local Rotary Club for their inaugural trade show, DAC NW is featuring an interactive youth transition exercise called the **"Tree of Life"** to guide high school students transitioning out of school into pre-employment concepts:
 - **Roots:** Representing survival and foundational needs.
 - **Trunk:** Representing individual core values.
 - **Branches:** Representing career and personal goals.
 - **Leaves:** Representing personal wants and future aspirations.
- DAC NW will be hosting resource tables at the massive Steps for Autism event in Spokane on April 25th, alongside participation in local Disability Pride Week initiatives.
- **Save the Date: Annual Bridging Community Celebration**
 - Celebrating the 36th anniversary of the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - Taking over the fountain area, carousel, and the orange bridge spanning the river at Riverfront Park in Spokane.
 - A fully intersectional, multicultural experience featuring live performances, guest speeches, free food, a dedicated kids zone, and vendor booths lining both sides of the bridge.
- This year's event will debut a public wheelchair obstacle course near the carousel, designed to give the broader public a firsthand understanding of spatial barriers and the critical importance of universal design. Vendor applications will be distributed shortly.

Faith Brown, Executive Director, Center for Independence (CFI)

- Core independent living and systems advocacy efforts are increasingly restricted by skyrocketing regional housing costs, severe workforce capacity shortages, and stark service disparities between urban hubs and rural/tribal communities.
- The region is consciously shifting its focus toward systemic power building, giving individuals with disabilities the structural platforms, financial tools, and confidence to drive legislative change themselves.
- Over the past year, peer-driven advocacy teams conducted targeted legislative education briefings with three elected representatives, cementing the role of people with disabilities as trusted advisors in state policymaking.
- Breaking from the traditional model that restricts summer programming solely to contracted Centers for Independent Living (CIL/CFI) enrollees, this year's summer workshops are open to *all* area youth with disabilities.
- To directly support youth stepping into summer employment, specialized financial literacy sessions are scheduled for late May and early June.
- Systemic advocacy achieved a major milestone during the SILC lunch hour, where CFI served as an embedded editor and co-author for Tacoma Public Schools' Policy 3412, which establishes formalized educational and health accommodations for students with adrenal insufficiency.

- The center continues to provide systems-level technical assistance to one of Washington's largest school districts, holding a permanent seat on the Equity Policy Review Committee to directly shape policy revisions presented to the school board.
- Staff are partnering with the Washington State Historical Society to audit and co-develop frameworks that guarantee full representation, accessibility, and meaningful participation across Washington's public history and cultural facilities.
- Staff met directly with the Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) ahead of incoming federal disaster resource openings.
- Partnerships are being deepened with regional immigrant rights organizations to identify, track, and protect individuals with disabilities navigating or facing high risks of detention or incarceration. The initiative centers on creating diversion strategies to prevent unnecessary institutionalization and secure missing legal, social, and medical accommodations.
- The center is actively facilitating infrastructure discussions to secure home energy resiliency systems for households with disabilities, aggressively targeting rural areas and tribal reservations where infrastructure reliability disparities are most dangerous during prolonged power grid failures.
- As part of the broader energy and housing resiliency push, staff are providing direct technical assistance to property owners and landlords on universal design and sustainable engineering, while continuing to

supply independent living advocacy directly to renters and leaseholders.

- In Q1 2026, the center was invited by U.S. Representative Rick Larsen's office to provide direct community input and expert guidance following a severe December weather disaster.
- Staff mobilized alongside the Washington Emergency Management Division's (EMD) Access and Functional Needs Manager to formally elevate the systemic barriers, localized hardships, and structural inequities experienced by disaster survivors with disabilities.
- The center submitted a comprehensive, community-informed formal response to the federal government, outlining explicit requests for targeted aid to fix the disproportionate impact of climate disasters on households with access and functional needs.
- The center launched a comprehensive, real-time outreach campaign contacting every participant within their registry database.
- The data explicitly tracks ongoing hardships and unmet regional needs, while simultaneously identifying and mapping the specific community partners, mutual aid groups, and local resources that successfully provided resilient support during crises.
- The center hosted an interactive Advocacy Day featuring peer-led speeches and structured systemic change exercises, collecting a library of lived-experience reflections to launch through the spring and summer.
- A structured storytelling and systems-change program was introduced, utilizing three progressive modules to safely amplify individual experiences:

- **Pure Light**
- **Spotlight**
- **Flashlight**
- **The Flashcard Prompt Exercise:** As a tactical tool within these modules, participants utilized reflective flashcards to bypass standard institutional narratives. Key prompts and powerful community insights included:
 - *"What is a question you wish somebody would ask you?"*
 - *"How do you learn best?"*
 - *"What is a question you wish people would stop asking you?"*
 - *"What is one thing you want somebody to know about you?"*
 - *"What small change made a big difference in your life?"* — To which one community member powerfully responded: *"Faith in my independence."*
- The Center for Independent Living has solidified agreements with regional Puget Sound transit authorities to dramatically expand structural mobility and regional connectivity.
- Universal transit cards have been officially allocated for all new and incoming center staff, guaranteeing seamless, cross-agency regional travel.
- **Inter-County Network Coverage:** This integration ensures full mobility across all major regional systems, explicitly including:
 - Pierce Transit
 - King County Metro
 - Community Transit (Snohomish County)
 - Sound Transit Link Light Rail

- The Center for Independent Living (CIL) successfully secured fully funded ORCA transit cards for all current employees, alongside dedicated card allocations for all incoming and new personnel.
- This benefit provides staff with unrestricted, fare-free mobility across the entire greater Puget Sound transportation grid, drastically improving the center's capacity to deliver localized, community-based services. The transit integration explicitly covers:
 - Pierce Transit
 - King County Metro
 - Community Transit (Snohomish County)
 - Sound Transit Link Light Rail and Sounder Commuter Rail
 - Kitsap Transit Foot Ferries, the Tacoma Link, and all regional public Vanpools
- The center is in active partnership negotiations with Amtrak to serve as an official regional tester for their brand-new, universally accessible railcar launching in Summer 2026. Peer advocates with lived experience will directly evaluate and refine the car's layout to shape the future of accessible intercity rail travel.
- In alignment with the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL), the center officially closed its northern satellite office in Marysville on May 31st.
- While evaluating real estate for a more centralized permanent northern hub, the organization is beta-testing a distributed, fully remote workforce model across the North Sound. This setup minimizes static overhead while expanding real-time geographic adaptability and consumer outreach.

- To facilitate fluid hybrid and community-based service delivery, the organization is systematically converting to a 100% paperless operational model, maximizing long-term efficiency, document accessibility, and scalability.
- Over the past five months, leadership systematically overhauled all internal organizational policies and procedures to strengthen compliance and structural clarity.
- The center successfully migrated to a high-capacity database system to elevate data integrity and reporting metrics, while simultaneously onboarding new professional fiscal partners specializing in advanced nonprofit accounting, bookkeeping, and audit assurance.
- Human resources is executing a comprehensive review and update of all organizational job descriptions to accurately reflect evolving roles and support data-backed, equitable wage adjustments across all departments.
- Current recruitment and workforce development efforts are heavily focused on building a diverse, mission-driven team while actively embedding a sustainable corporate culture that protects employee work-life balance.
- Reflecting an absolute commitment to equity and lived experience, the organization's executive leadership team is entirely comprised of **(100%)** Black and Brown women with disabilities.
- The center is actively recruiting new governing board members who directly mirror the community and share a unified vision for systemic disability justice, community-led intersectionality, and aggressive systems change.

Mayra Colazo, Executive Director, Central Washington Disability Resources (CWDR)

- The Yakima office has hired two new bilingual staff members—one dedicated entirely to systems advocacy and the other serving as a part-time Independent Living (IL) specialist.
- Backed by vital foundational grant support, the organization has scaled its capacity from a baseline of just 4 employees up to a team of **12 staff members**, dramatically increasing direct service delivery across Central Washington.
- Direct service staff currently maintain intense active caseloads averaging **30 to 50 consumers per person** (with some individual staff carrying even more). The newly added positions are strategically structured to provide caseload relief and cross-coverage support.
- The center has restructured its youth initiatives into comprehensive, age-specific brackets to ensure full, continuous support across all developmental stages:
 - **Ages 2–5 (Assistive Technology Playgroups):** Located in Yakima, this brand-new bracket features specialized support groups where parents and children connect over adaptive, AT-engineered toys to foster early childhood disability milestones.
 - **Grades K–5 (Disability Awareness):** Focuses on peer inclusion, foundational disability education, and interactive outdoor recreational activities.
 - **Grades 6–8 (Pre-Employment Explorations):** Blends accessible outdoor recreation—such as hiking and fishing—

with early, age-appropriate introductions to workplace and career concepts.

- **Grades 9–12 (Hands-On Transition Readiness):** Focuses on tactical pre-employment skills, including direct resume building, tracking down local volunteer opportunities, and mapping out community internship options.
- **Ages 18+ (Adult Autonomy):** Independent living groups tailored strictly to adult transition, continuing education, and career retention.
- **ESD 105 Summer Workshop:** The center is partnering directly with Educational Service District 105 (ESD 105) to deliver this year's Summer Youth Transition Workshop, with the long-term goal of securing the primary contract next year to scale operations further.
- **Popular Virtual ASL Club:** The center's highly popular American Sign Language club continues to run successfully online, providing structured lessons on vocabulary, sentence construction, and weekly home practice.
- Launching next week in both Yakima and Ellensburg, this specialized 12-week curriculum is designed for individuals with developmental disabilities. Cohorts meet weekly to build practical skills in hygiene, nutritional habits, and adaptive outdoor activities.
- Plans are underway to expand the center's popular accessible pool pass program directly into Yakima
- The center's dedicated VA program continues to see a steady influx of new service referrals. Staff are cross-training additional team

members to expand the program's footprint deeper into the Yakima and Tri-Cities areas.

- Building on successful basic computer classes, staff are expanding outreach directly into local assisted living facilities and community living centers to deliver on-site digital literacy training.
- Launching the Advocacy Club: Led by the new systems advocacy staff, this club actively trains community members to navigate municipal government.
- Advocacy teams are launching targeted physical audits of local sidewalks and bus stops, generating data to force municipal prioritization of ADA compliance and universal design, while continuing to spearhead regional emergency preparedness panels.
- The center is hosting its annual neighborhood cleanup event next week, inviting volunteers and community members to give back through localized environmental stewardship.
- Staff are tracking and responding to an intersectional spike in health disparities, mental health strain, and severe isolation within Central Washington's immigrant communities, actively building trust and safety resources for individuals hesitant to navigate public spaces.
- Leadership maintains a heavy footprint on key state-level bodies, including the Governor's licensing subcommittee, Department of Health advisory panels, and a collaborative charter mapping out how community organizations report back to the Secretary of State.
- Preliminary planning has begun for a major fundraising gala tentatively scheduled for May 2027, intentionally timed to accommodate traveling West-side partners.

Kimberly Meck, Executive Director, Disability Empowerment Center (DEC)

- The center's specialized youth group program is currently active across eight different local schools. The initiative is 100% on track to fully expend its existing contract allocation, establishing a strong foundation to request increased funding next year.
- Training is officially underway to secure final provider approval for the VDC program.
- A veteran on the center's staff has officially been promoted into the dedicated VDC Program Coordinator role to lead the rollout.
- In response to renewed staff interest, the center is preparing to restart its certified HCL curriculum, deploying pre-trained team facilitators to lead the community wellness classes.
- The King County Disability Consortium continues to meet systematically on the third Tuesday of every month to coordinate local equity strategies.
- The upcoming session features King County Elections officials outlining steps to establish official accessible voting locations. The briefing will clarify legal parameters surrounding ballot collection:
 - **Legal Ballot Dropping:** Staff confirmed it is completely legal under Washington state law for a trusted individual to drop off another person's ballot.
 - **CIL Drop Boxes:** Because ballot handling is legal when built on mutual trust, independent living centers can legally act as coordinated ballot collection sites to transport materials to county drop boxes before election deadlines.

- Elections officials will also brief the consortium on potential operational impacts to King County's mail-in voting processes depending on pending Supreme Court rulings regarding ballot-counting windows.
- The *Understanding Ableism* presentation series continues to stream on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Recent sessions covered:
 - Accessible travel frameworks
 - Highlighting the work of disabled artists
 - Navigating different historical and medical models of disability
- The designated focus topic features comprehensive emergency preparedness. The program is being successfully run by two center interns, one of whom has built a comprehensive four-part Emergency Prep video series now live on the center's YouTube channel.
- Cross-agency teams are designing a specialized curriculum for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) counselors to deeply educate them on the structural definition, scope, and legal rights behind independent living services.
- King County staff are launching an in-person "road trip" to visit every local DVR branch office.
- The center is entering a quarterly partnership with Bridge Ministries in Redmond. Will co-host community events that maximize geographic coverage without duplicating services.
- Following a successful engagement last year, Seattle's fully accessible, disability-led *Sound Theatre Company* has reinvited the center to host a post-show audience "talkback" discussion. The event

will take place after a live performance of the Jazz-age production, *The Wild Party*.

- Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP) meeting, officials announced that the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) will officially reopen.
- After initially being forced to close due to severe state budget cuts, emergency funding was successfully secured to restore operations.
- The library is currently hiring two new staff members to manage the space. While it will initially operate on modified, part-time hours, the reopening restores an invaluable statewide pipeline of physical braille, audio, and large-print literacy materials for blind and visually impaired Washingtonians.

History of the Independent Living Movement in Washington – Mark Leeper

- See presentation

Group Exercise – Courtney Williams

“What will you do to move the independent living movement forward to make sure the voices of people with disabilities are heard and respected in Washington?”

Courtney: Again, I told you I was immersed in the developmental disability world and advocating for that community. This is another community that includes everybody in the disability realm. Sometimes I forget I am someone with lived experience. I am dyslexic, I have bipolar disorder. I forget I am this person in this community representing a community and I have not done my part. The other part of that, this -- I am dyslexic and I

haven't slept so you will see I get lost in my thoughts and words and I can't articulate. It impacts so many things we don't think of. Depth perception, I am not just clumsy, it is my dyslexia. I have been learning more and as I am hearing legislation, policies being proposed, I see a lot of exclusion with our Deaf and Hard of Hearing and blank unity. I have been looking at data of these communities that have shown devastating realities in these community spaces. We don't bring it up enough so as we are moving forward in the work with our SPIL and strategic plan and outreach and community building, we are going to be doing within WASILC, I am committed to being more inclusive. We have to be. These voices haven't been at the table, the presence of these communities have not been at the table and we need to be more upfront and clear they have a role so that is what I am going to do and what I am committed to doing.

Dion: A lot of things come to my head. I am going to go with the one that stands out the most. I have been involved in transit related discussions throughout my 36 years of transit related, those discussions as a driver, supervisor, manager, administrator, project manager throughout my whole career. I have been having pretty much the same issues when it came to challenges involving hours with disabilities and for so long, I believe it's because when those issues arrive at agency, the infrastructure is never prepared to not only hear but to take action towards amending whatever the issues are. So I think as time has gone by these issues have come up over and over that it is becoming quite loud. But the challenge is always who is the person or group that is going to take action? So issues often come in but they said it and people want to do stuff but the turnover within organizations really restrict any

movement. So my goal, first of all, not having a CIL in Vancouver or Southwest Washington is a crime. And I believe that had we had a CIL in the 90s, we probably did because Mark said we did, something happened. We lost momentum, huge. So one of my commitments is to work on getting a CIL here, putting the right people that want to communicate and contact with those that need to communicate with them.

FAITH: Okay, thank you so much. This is a great question and prompt. I appreciate Mark for emphasizing we are advocates. One of my key takeaways from some of my earlier trainings in IL was Ed Roberts saying the most important service a CIL can provide is advocacy. I am proud to be an advocate and activist in our movement to bring independent living as an inherent and automatically known system and program but how we will be able to do it is continue to educate and celebrate our communities. So our community members can safely identify and safely coordinate in community so there needs can be better amplified and heard. One of the gaps we recognize here socially and in our region, the lack of spaces to be able to coordinate community. Either through physical and accessibility, we need outreach efforts that need to increase to ensure we are reaching our underserved, underrepresented populations. Our mechanism for supporting this is celebration. In order for us to feel safe in our identities and feel connected in our community's celebration and celebrating our differences and existence is a key and critical component to supporting our community. I know as an individual with a disability that I struggle to find safe spaces for disclosure. And therefore for support and connection, that is a shadow period of our work that we are directly addressing through representation, direct

recruitment, through bravely creating pathways for partnerships and stakeholders to come through into our movement in LA ship. I really appreciate the message about the external systemic voice. Those are our allies. I am really big on organizing allyship for communities, increased movement and support. I think we are in good company and it's exciting to be one of the newer members in these meetings as a new ED, it is exciting to be able to have this opportunity, our critical strategy is liberating resources. In order for power to be redistributed we need to liberate resources and remove the barriers of access to these resources. We work very hard to liberate these resources, make sure our federal funds, services, our people, our meeting our people where they are at. We are dedicated to that and we are centering it on education and celebration.

ERIN: This is Erin, thank you for asking this question. I had to think about it for a moment. When I think about moving forward with independent living movement I think about stories. As something we are big up here is promoting stories. We are a small office, four of us here, we have a large area to cover. I drive all over the place all the time trying to connect with people. As a small office our voices are tiny. But when we get more people involved and have that focused area of telling our story, it is so much more powerful and making effective change. An example of this was 14 of us got together and we decided to share our Medicaid stories to our representative and it was a powerful experience, families, professionals, people who traveled like my son and I, I live an hour and 1/2 away from his office. We joined together and took over the office and shared our stories. It wasn't lobbying, it was simply this is our life, this is why Medicaid is so important. It's these stories that make a difference.

Even before I joined the disability action center it was well known in the northeast corner of the state people feel cut off from the west side. There is a cultural divide, distances, it takes and the entire day to get to Olympia if I was going to meet with any representative. Just a lack of services, we live in an historically underserved area. We have the Spokane, Kalispell tribes here, one of the major factors in being cut off is the lack of infrastructure. The Internet. Sul service. There is huge gaps and people in this day and age are connected through virtual needs, like in this meeting today we are privileged to be able to connect across the state. But if I was anywhere north or on one of the reservations around me, I am lucky enough to be by a hub that allows me to have Internet. Along Highway 395 there are huge gaps getting between where I am to Spokane. So it's worse if you travel further away from 395, our only main thoroughfare to get anywhere. Trying to bring these stories to make that effective change is a huge challenge. Advocacy days, I love the idea. I am involved with the advocacy days every year. I can't make it over to Olympia when they do their in-person times. That is a 12-hour trip for me. That is a huge barrier for other folks around here. Again, that adds to feeling cut off. Voices silenced. So finding a way to get these stories out is one of my goals. The disability action center here is highly focused in system work. I posted the list that we were involved in the packet. You can see everything we are involved in across the region. We bring ourselves to the table to make sure the disability voice is heard. We encourage our consumers to join us. We need to make our voices louder so that has been our goal is the disability voice to be louder and heard and get those stories out so people know what it is like for folks, especially here where we feel rather cut off. That is my two cents on that.

Tony: I just wanted to say what I will do to keep making voices heard is I will continue to fight and continue to stress accessibility because I often find with my disability that it is the last to be thought about a lot of times. So it's difficult with me and I know it is difficult for other blind and low vision folks going to meetings or somewhere that things aren't accessible. I was on the website yesterday, a government website as a matter of fact. Not accessible, can't get past the account stage. The accessibility they say they have doesn't work. So my contribution is to continue doing what I am doing and continue to fight and educate [Audio Issues] and just be present to make sure it is heard and accessibility is important and the only way to move forward is to make everything accessible for everyone. That is it.

Mark: My first thing I'm going to do is continue to hire people [Audio Issues] hiring people [Audio Issues] is awesome. One of the awesome things I am working on and will continue to work on, I will continue working for a while. I want -- we have a large population of indigenous people in the state. Often the whole term independent living is a turnoff. We worked on that for years and that goes back to relationships so I want to continue building the relationships and making independent living real for all communities. That is why I mentioned the indigenous interdependence thing that will be coming out and has been something we have been espousing. That is a real push we will continue to make. On reservation lands and underserved communities to try to develop leadership.

Jim: physical barriers are easy to fix. Communication barriers, not that easy but most of the technology is already here. Just need to package it right.

Adjourn 3:30 pm



**Washington
Statewide
Independent
Living Council**

Executive Director's Report

Presenter: Courtney Williams, MPA

Date: July 9, 2026

Reporting Period: Q3 / Summer 2026

Good morning Council Members, partners, and community members. I am pleased to present the Executive Director's report for this quarter. We have been moving at an incredible pace, bridging high-level state data integration with direct, ground-level community advocacy.

Below is an unpacking of our most critical operational pillars from this past quarter.

1. Regional Outreach: Operation Connection 2026 (Yakima & Spokane)

Throughout May and June, we successfully executed our regional emergency management outreach trainings across Eastern Washington. These sessions were deeply vital, targeting areas that are often structurally under-resourced when it comes to inclusive emergency infrastructure.

- **The Focus:** We brought together local emergency managers, public health staff, and cross-disability community members to build baseline frameworks for Access and Functional Needs (AFN) planning.
- **Fiscal Breakdown & Deliverables:** Out of our \$11,000 budget allocation, we finalized \$9,248 for site logistics, accessible venue space, and regional outreach translation services. The remaining \$1,752 was directly funneled into building and distributing physical, accessible **emergency "to-go" packs** for local participants.
- **The Core Impact:** By physically putting independent living advocates and county emergency responders in the same room, we are actively shifting the emergency management culture from reactive triage to proactive inclusion.

2. Data Advocacy: The DSHS RDA Mapping Project & Pilot Opportunities

Data is the engine of policy change. For months, we have been pursuing a formal data integration request with the DSHS Research and Data Analysis (RDA) Division. I am incredibly excited to share that this initiative is evolving from a structural data request into a tangible, actionable opportunity.

- **The Objective:** The goal of this mapping project is to integrate and track hyper-local, county-level disability trends against public assistance populations. Historically, state-level disability data has been far too generalized, making it nearly impossible to pinpoint exact regional service gaps.
- **Seeking Pilot Communities:** Now that the initial data mapping parameters are taking shape with RDA, WASILC will actively be **seeking local pilot communities**—specifically targeting a mix of highly urbanized centers and isolated rural counties.
- **Why This Matters:** Securing these pilots is a massive structural win because it gives WASILC concrete, indisputable baseline data. By owning this localized insight, **WASILC can strategically leverage future funding streams, grants, and state allocations** to scale our programming and directly target underfunded areas. It moves us away from guesswork and puts us in a position of powerful, data-backed leverage for future legislative and federal resource requests.

3. Programmatic Transition: Strategic Backstop for CIEP

A major point of vulnerability occurred this past cycle when **we lost our baseline program funding through the Department of Health (DOH)** for the Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP). This loss threatened the immediate continuity of our emergency management advocacy.

- **A Special Thank You to DVR:** I want to extend an immense, heartfelt thank you to the **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**. When this funding gap emerged, DVR stepped up immediately to cover the financial shortfall, single-handedly keeping the CIEP program fully functional and intact. Their agility and collaboration saved a vital community resource.
- **Strategic Planning for Jim's Program:** While DVR's backstop has protected us in the short term, we must face the structural reality that we cannot rely solely on temporary emergency funding fixes. We need to **strategically plan for the long-term future and financial sustainability of Jim House's program.**

- **September Timeline:** To do this correctly, we will not compress this conversation into today's limited schedule. Instead, **the Council will dedicate significant, focused time in September to full-day strategic planning session** specifically map out a resilient, permanent funding pipeline for CIEP.

4. Council Operations: Consistent Cadence, Training, and Updates

As a council, our internal strength dictates our external impact. Recently, multiple council members have expressed a strong desire to **meet more consistently** rather than just waiting for our standard quarterly milestones.

- **The Goal:** Moving forward, we are shifting toward a more regular rhythm. This consistent cadence will ensure everyone stays tightly aligned on rapid statewide policy developments and gets the regular updates needed to make agile decisions.
- **A Focus on Member Training:** Meeting more frequently will also allow us to build in structured, regular council training modules—diving deeper into the Independent Living Philosophy, state rulemaking processes, and cross-disability advocacy strategies.
- **Leadership Deferral:** We are fully moving forward with this operational upgrade. For the specific logistics regarding the future meeting calendar and training schedules, **I will defer to Kimberly Meck and Dion** to provide the full update during their respective briefings later in the agenda.

5. Structural Alignment: Merging Committees into Legislative & Advocacy

As we prepare for the upcoming legislative cycles and refine our internal operations, efficiency is everything. To streamline our council workflows and maximize our policy impact, we are formally consolidating our standing committee structures.

- **The Change:** Moving forward, the **Youth Committee** and the **Education and Outreach Committee** are formally **merging into the standing Legislative and Advocacy Committee**, co-chaired by Sawyer Sterns and Tony Hester.
- **The Strategy:** Rather than spreading our council energy across multiple separate standing committees, this consolidation unites our youth initiatives, community outreach, and policy focus into a singular, centralized hub for systemic advocacy.
- **Immediate Focus:** This newly integrated, powerhouse committee will take immediate ownership of our two largest upcoming milestones:

1. **NCIL 2026 Preparation:** Finalizing our unified federal talking points for the National Council on Independent Living conference in Washington, D.C., later this month.
2. **2027 Legislative Advocacy Day:** Leading the strategic rollout, platform building, and community mobilization for our upcoming Capitol event on April 2, 2027.

Closing Thoughts

Whether we are adjusting our standing committee structures to be more formidable advocates, mapping out county-level systemic barriers with DSHS data analysts, or navigating complex state agency partnerships to protect vital community infrastructure, our guiding compass remains exactly the same: **Consumer control, peer support, and unyielding cross-disability representation.**

Thank you to the staff, the executive team, and our incredible network partners for ensuring that WASILC remains a powerful force for systemic change in Washington State. I am happy to take any questions before we move to our council action items.



**Washington
Statewide
Independent
Living Council**

WASILC Quarterly Treasurer's Report

Date: July 9, 2026

Reporting Period: Q3 / Summer 2026 Briefing

Executive Summary: Fiscal Health Status

We are pleased to report that WASILC's financial position is stable and **exactly where we need to be** for this point in the fiscal cycle. Our Part B funds are being actively and appropriately drawn down, ensuring that state -level independent living operations are fully supported.

A major highlight for this cycle is that the **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has covered the Community Infrastructure and Emergency Preparedness (CIEP) program costs** . This strategic inter-agency support has successfully insulated our baseline operational budget and allowed us to maximize our direct community impact.

FFY 2025: Part B Operational Funds (Close -Out Summary)

We are successfully wrapping up our Federal Fiscal Year 2025 allocations. Due to the timing of a final vendor billing cycle, we are utilizing a standard and minor "borrow forward" adjustment from our upcoming 2026 allocation to cover a late invoice.

- **Total Allocation:** \$12,877.22
- **Planned Q90 Expenditure:** \$5,998.00
- **GovDelivery Communication Platform (Final Invoice):** \$7,824.22
- **FFY 2025 Balance: - \$1,935.00**
 - *Note:* This temporary deficit will be covered by the FFY 2026 estimated allocation, balancing out the 2025 books smoothly.

FFY 2026: Estimated Funds & Strategic Spending Plan

Our projected planning budget for FFY 2026 balances out perfectly to maximize our statewide outreach, legislative presence, and national network participation.

Budget Item / Initiative

Allocation / Cost

Status / Context

Total Estimated FFY 2026 Allocation	\$18,667.00	Projected Baseline
FFY 2025 Reconciliation (GovDelivery Balance)	-\$1,935.00	Deducted to close out 2025 books
Community Outreach Emergency Management Trainings	-\$11,000.00	Yakima & Spokane Sessions: \$9,248 confirmed for venue/logistics; \$1,752 remaining for "to-go" emergency packs
NCIL Annual Conference (Washington, D.C.)	-\$3,000.00	Covers travel, lodging, and registration for Jim House
2027 Legislative Advocacy Day	-\$900.00	Columbia Room booking fee secured at the State Capitol
Remaining Unallocated Contingency	-\$1,832.00	Flexible "wiggle room" for unexpected operational costs
Total FFY 2026 Spending Plan	\$18,667.00	Balanced to \$0.00

Key Takeaways for the Council

1. **Compliance and Drawdowns:** Part B funds are being actively spent down within required federal timelines, preventing any risk of turning back unspent allocations.
2. **CIEP Protection:** By collaborating with DVR to cover the CIEP program, our emergency preparedness framework remains strong despite broader fiscal pressures.
3. **Future Outlook:** Major initiatives for late 2026 and early 2027—including regional outreach tours, national advocacy representation, and Legislative Advocacy Day—are completely pre-funded and secured.

Client Assistance Program

REHABILITATION ADVOCACY

CAP Annual Report

2025

206-849-2939

washingtoncap2@gmail.com

GIVE US A CALL !

LETTER FROM THE CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

Dear Washington Vocational Rehabilitation customers, staff and community partners,

2025 was an interesting and challenging year. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs around the country faced uncertainty with federal funding, as well as budget cuts at the state level. The number of individuals with disabilities seeking services from CAP and VR agencies increased, due to higher living costs, and proposed cuts and work requirements for other support programs, such as Medicaid and food benefits. VR participants struggled with increased barriers to employment due to behavioral health, communication and interpersonal limitations.

The environment required collective problem solving and efficient use of resources. Washington CAP is unique across the nation in sharing strong partnerships with VR agencies and the State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs). CAP appreciates our shared goals, collaborative working relationships and commitment to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Despite the obstacles of navigating possible administrative and funding changes, and an ever-changing landscape, there was much to celebrate. Highlights from last year include CAP's Fair Hearing and Mediation Time and Risk Factor Analysis, implementation of several customer service and satisfaction strategies by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and updated self-employment policies and procedures by the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB).

It has been an honor to work alongside DVR and DSB leadership and staff, the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC B), as well as Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs (TVR) to achieve our shared missions of improving the lives of individuals with disabilities through employment. CAP is proud of our accomplishments this year, as detailed in the report below.

Please contact us if you have questions or want to learn more about CAP. Customers can contact CAP by calling or texting 206-849-2939 or emailing washingtoncap2@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Jen Bean

Jen Bean, MA
Executive Director
capjenbean@gmail.com

Douglas Burkhalter

Douglas Burkhalter, MA
Assistant Director
capdoughb@gmail.com

PURPOSE

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is a private non-profit organization funded by the Federal Government under the 1973 Rehabilitation Act as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. CAP is an advocacy program for customers and applicants in Washington state seeking vocational rehabilitation services from:

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) programs
- Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

CAP provides information about vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs, services and the VR process. We help customers understand their rights and responsibilities and navigate the rehabilitation process. CAP works to resolve problems through individual advocacy. CAP also engages in systemic advocacy, including being a member of the State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs) for both DVR and DSB. CAP's partnership with the SRCs is essential for many of our successful systemic efforts and outcomes.

Through our individual and systemic advocacy, CAP strives to amplify the voices of customers and staff to improve service delivery, employment outcomes, and satisfaction with program services.

CAP STAFF

Jen Bean, MA – Executive Director

Jen has been working in the Vocational Rehabilitation field for 25+ years. Her work experience includes being a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Benefits Specialist, Independent Living Counselor, and Regional Trainer at DVR. Jen serves as Chair of the WSRC, as well as Chair of Policy committee on the SRC-B. She is also a member of the WSRC Customer Satisfaction and Program Evaluation and Policy and Planning subcommittees and serves on the Executive committee for both the WSRC and the SRC-B.

When Jen isn't working, she enjoys taking care of her 80+ houseplants, surrounding herself with art and music, and being creative with writing projects and her new hobby, learning to paint.

Doug Burkhalter, MA – Assistant Director

Doug has been working in the Vocational Rehabilitation field for 25+ years. His work experience includes being an Employment/Business Relations Specialist, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Rehabilitation Technician, and Trainer at DVR. Doug serves on the Advisory Committee for Western Washington University's Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling program and the University of Washington (UW) Long Covid Aftercare, Recovery, and Support (CAREs) Community Advisory Board (CAB).

When Doug isn't working, he enjoys spending time with his family and playing catch with his black lab, Trixie. Doug has been perfecting his skills with 3D printing and is proud of the fun gifts he creates for loved ones.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

DVR FAIR HEARING & MEDIATION TIME & RISK FACTOR ANALYSIS

Washington CAP has a history of successful case resolution at low levels, reducing the number of participants who need Fair Hearings (Formal Appeal) and Mediation. These processes are time intensive, redirect staff time, and impact participant services and satisfaction. Over the last year, the number of DVR participants utilizing Fair Hearings and Mediation (and other options for participant rights) increased. The impact on staff time and cost of these processes was unknown.

As part of analyzing potential impacts of proposed administrative funding changes to both CAP and VR, CAP Director worked with DVR Fair Hearings and Disability Access Administrator, DVR Chief of Operations, and CAP Assistant Director to complete Time and Risk Factor Analysis of Fair Hearings and Mediation.

We compiled data and findings, provided a comprehensive written summary, and shared the results with VR leaders throughout Washington. Best practices identified in the analysis were incorporated into DVR's new Complex Case Guidance policy which outlines a streamlined and comprehensive approach to resolving case concerns and disagreements through by de-escalation and improved coordination. This increases efficiency and decreases time to case resolution.

CAP Director also met with Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) programs to share the findings and understand risk factors specific to each of their programs. These were included in the report as Addendums.

Additionally, Washington CAP was asked to lead a session about systemic advocacy at the National Disability Rights CAP Technical Assistance Fall Training. We provided an overview of our process and shared our findings and recommendations for how this tool could be used for systemic advocacy and outreach in their states.

Overall, our analysis indicates continued increases in Fair Hearings and Mediation over the next year. Risk factors include:

- More individuals with disabilities seeking VR services due to:
 - Increased cost of living
 - Existing and proposed cuts to a variety of social service and employment related programs
 - Implementation of work requirements
- DVR closing of all priority service categories and implementation of a waitlist
- Increase in participants with age related disabilities with cognitive and interpersonal barriers, ex. memory, confusion and frustration
- Increase in participants with behavioral health, cognitive, communication and interpersonal barriers to services, including "bad faith" conduct

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS

PARTNERSHIP WITH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS (SRC)

CAP Director's term as Chair of the WSRC completed at the end of this fiscal year. CAP Director also served on the Customer Satisfaction and Program Evaluation (CSPE), Policy and Planning, and Executive Subcommittees for the WSRC. CAP Director is Chair of the Policy committee of the SRC-B and serves on the Executive Committee. CAP Director met weekly with WSRC Director to coordinate and strategize system advocacy efforts where there is overlap with our own program priorities. Advocacy efforts and opportunities are also discussed in monthly committee meetings.

DVR CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS:

For the last several years CAP and the WSRC, both individually and in combined efforts, advocated for DVR to improve customer service and satisfaction. Last year, DVR completed and implemented the Individualized Plan for Employment Timeliness Project, focusing on the "Heart of VR". This was a significant undertaking, and CAP is already seeing positive impacts. Highlights from DVR's work that addressed specific CAP concerns include:

- Streamlining the process of vocational assessment and plan development
- Establishing a statewide intake process, improving the Application and Intake process, including the development and deployment of the following support documents:
 - Participant Intake Guide
 - Counselor Guide
 - Participant Information Form
 - The Participant Counselor Communication Agreement

DSB SELF-EMPLOYMENT POLICY UPDATE

CAP Director, as Chair of the SRC B Policy committee, led the review of DSB self-employment policies and made recommendations for improvement. We met with the DVR Self-Employment expert to learn about DVR's policies and procedures and discussed feedback from current and past participants who worked through the DSB self-employment process. CAP Director shared feedback about the self-employment experience from both DVR and DSB participants shared during contacts with CAP.

DSB drafted new self-employment policies and procedures which will be reviewed by the Policy committee next fiscal year. Over the next several years the SRCB will review participant data and satisfaction for self-employment cases. The expected outcome is improved access to self-employment as a job goal and a streamlined process for exploring and approving self-employment plans.

Training & Outreach

TRAINING

During the last fiscal year, CAP provided 84 training sessions, reaching 1271 individuals. CAP training included information about CAP purpose, mission, mandates, services and role in the VR system. We also covered VR history and law, customer satisfaction trends, customer rights and conflict resolution options.

Training models included group New Employee Meet and Greet, attending Regional Management Meetings, sharing at WSRC and SRC-B quarterly meetings, and attending Executive Leadership Team meetings. Additionally, CAP provided training to various community partners, stakeholders and customers, including Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Director Meetings and TVR Programs, the Governor's Committee on Disability, and the National Federation for the Blind (NFB).

For the third time in 5 years, Washington CAP was asked to present at National Disability Rights CAP Technical Assistance Fall Training. In addition to a session about Systemic Advocacy, discussed above, we led another session for the 10 other Independent CAP programs. We shared our data collection tools and process for: Individual Advocacy, Case Management, and Systemic Advocacy. CAP Assistant Director developed templates to support the other Independent CAP programs with accurately collecting and reporting data.

OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

CAP engages in outreach activities through our training activities and work on the SRCs. Highlights from 2025 include:

- **National Federation of the Blind conference - Live the Life You Want**
CAP Director presented at the National Federation of the Blind conference in Vancouver, WA. It was a great opportunity to reach individuals who are blind or low vision, service providers, advocates and family members. CAP explained our role in the vocational rehabilitation program, provided information about CAP program services and the referral process, as well as shared CAP trends and highlights from CAP's role on the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC B).
- **Western Washington University (WWU) Masters in Rehab Counseling Program:**
CAP Assistant Director has been working with the Western Washington University (WWU) Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling Program to support recruitment efforts in the field of Vocational Rehabilitation since 2022. Activities with WWU include CAP Assistant Director serving on the program advisory committee and providing training to the MA program students through a variety of courses, mentoring and networking. Topics include the field of VR, advocacy for individuals with disabilities, and acting as a practice customer for their counseling classes.

- **WSRC Awarded the DSHS Community Partner Award**

The WSRC was awarded the DSHS Community Partner award in 2025. DVR Director Dana Phelps nominated the WSRC for this award for our work promoting a sense of community and belonging in the workplace and in the communities served by the Department of Social and Health Services.

“Council members engage with participants and community partners to understand the collective needs, concerns and priorities related to DVR services. Because one in four people with disabilities live in poverty, the work of the WSRC and individuals that make up the council are important.” said Phelps.

The award ceremony took place Jan. 7, 2025, at DSHS headquarters in Olympia. Receiving the award on the council’s behalf were WSRC Chair Jen Bean, Vice-Chair Alex Toney, Executive Director Shelby Satko, and Executive Assistant Jolie Ramsey. We appreciate the work of all WSRC members, who serve as volunteers, for their time and commitment to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities.

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

INFORMATION & REFERRAL (I&R)

CAP is mandated to resolve issues at the lowest possible level, which includes information and referral (I&R) and support with self-advocacy. In this fiscal year, CAP experienced a 28% increase in requests for help, with over 1800 instances of I&R, including information about VR programs, CAP, Tribal VR, IL services, ADA, and general referral to community resources.

CAP CASE DEFINITION

A CAP “case” is one in which CAP provided I&R and support of self-advocacy was not sufficient in resolving a participant’s issues or concerns. To receive one-on-one advocacy, a participant must complete the CAP intake form and sign a release of information for the VR program they are working with, ex. DVR, DSB or both. Once they are received, CAP completes an investigation to determine if the VR agency followed applicable laws and policies and explored all options for case resolution.

If CAP agrees with VR’s decision, the relevant laws and policies are explained to the individual. When options remain on the table, CAP encourages creative problem solving, makes suggestions, and follows along on the case until the issue or concern is resolved. The CAP process typically includes individual meetings with both the participant and VR staff, a review of relevant case file documents, and joint meetings with the participant and VR staff. The number of CAP cases is significantly less than the number of I&R activities.

CAP CASELOAD DEMOGRAPHICS

PRIMARY DISABILITIES

CAP serves participants with a broad variety of disabilities, many of whom have multiple disabilities. Only primary disabilities are tracked for Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) reporting, using RSA specified categories. Below is a list of the most common. Other disabilities served include ADD/ADHD, Autoimmune & Immune Deficiencies, and Specific Learning Disabilities.

- 20% Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 20% Mental Illness
- 12% Acquired Brain Injury
- 10% Anxiety Disorder
- 7% Blindness, other Visual Impairments and DeafBlind

**Note: categories defined by RSA.*

GENDER & AGE

Gender:

- 51% Female
- 47% Male
- 2% Unknown

Age:

- 64% age 41-64
- 20% age 25-40
- 8% age 65+
- 3% age up to 18
- 2% age 19-24

RACE & ETHNICITY

Race and Ethnicity:

- 49% White
- 17% Two or more races*
- 12% Race/ethnicity unknown
- 8% Hispanic/Latino of any race
- 7% Black or African American
- 3% Asian
- 3% American Indian or Alaskan Native

**Note: RSA does not collect specific race data for those who are biracial/multiracial.*

CAP CASE ISSUES & OUTCOMES

PROBLEM AREA

- 56% Conflict about services
- 20% Communication problems
- 15% Plan development or implementation
- 4% Application or Eligibility
- 3% Related to Order of Selection
- 2% Requests information

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES – CLOSED CASES

2025 CAP Intervention Strategies

- **39% Investigation & Monitoring**
 - Talk with VR, review records
 - Explain law, policies and process to participant
- **31% Negotiation**
 - CAP explains options under law and policies to VR staff
 - CAP makes recommendations
- **22% Administrative Review**
 - CAP asks for review at higher level in VR
 - One step higher than whoever is already involved in case, ex. Supervisor, Regional Administrator of Asst. Director of Field Services
- **8% Short Term assistance**
 - Support self-advocacy
 - Explain laws and policies

CAP is required to resolve issues at the lowest possible level. If self-advocacy is not sufficient, the following are types of CAP intervention strategies reported to RSA, listed from lowest to highest level of resolution:

1. Short-term technical assistance
2. Investigation & monitoring
3. Negotiation
4. Mediation
5. Administrative Review
6. Formal appeal/fair hearing (with CAP representation)
7. Legal remedy/litigation

**Note, WA CAP only utilized what is necessary to resolve concerns.*

CLOSURE OUTCOMES – CLOSED CASES

- 39% All participant issues resolved
- 31% Some participant issues resolved
- 28% CAP agrees with VR decision
- 2% Participant non-responsive or cooperative with CAP

RESULTS ACHIEVED – CLOSED CASES

- 43% Individualized Plan for Employment developed/implemented
- 29% VR law or policy explained
- 10% Communication re-established
- 10% Assigned a new VR counselor or office
- 6% Participated in an evaluation/vocational assessment
- 2% Eligibility expedited

CAP Board

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Vanessa Treadway – Chair | • Abel Hartman |
| • Susan Dougherty-Guild – Vice Chair | • Joya Benson |
| • Sunny Rivera | • David Neubeck |
| • Jim McGinley | • Sheila Burkett-Luckey |

This year the CAP board welcomed former VRC at the Dept. of Services for the Blind Sheila Burkett-Luckey. We are excited to benefit from her decades of knowledge and experience. CAP is grateful for our board members and the extra work and support last year as we navigated uncertainty. We appreciate the expertise they bring related to rehabilitation, social services, advocacy, business and law. Without their support and partnership CAP would not be as successful. Thank you!



Jen & Doug taking the ferry to the WSRC May 2025 quarterly meeting in Port Angeles.



**Coalition on Inclusive
Emergency Planning
(CIEP)**



**Washington
Statewide
Independent
Living Council**

CIEP Report for WASILC July 2026 Quarterly Meeting

- Completed the AFN Review After-Action Report (AAR) on the December 2025 Flooding in Western Washington. Here are the links:
 - [CIEP AFN CMIST Review Dec 2025 to Jan 2026](#)
 - [CIEP Disaster Access and Functional Needs Review \(plain language\)](#)
- Co-instructed at WASILC's Community Connection training workshops in Yakima and Spokane
- Submitted a panel presentation proposal to the Washington Emergency Management Association Conference in September to discuss the AAR findings – It was just approved.
- Was a panelist on King County's Understanding Ableism webinar on Emergency Preparedness & Disability
- Was a panelist on WASILC's Representing the Cross-Disability Community
- Was a panelist on DOH's Language Access and Health
- Contributed to the State Health Improvement Plan
- Attended the Northwest Tribal Public Health Emergency Preparedness Conference in Ocean Shores

- Presented at the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest on Transportation findings in the AAR at Leavenworth
- Participated in the Tsunami Focus Group on alerts and warnings
- Visited two Disaster Recovery Centers and discussed procedures with FEMA's Region 10 Civil Rights Specialists related to some AAR findings.
- Invited Nathan Santo Domingo from DNR to present at June CIEP meeting about Smoke Preparedness
- Provided emergency preparedness training to DeafBlind advocates.



**Washington
Statewide
Independent
Living Council**

Legislative Committee Updates:

We are happy to announce our new committee leadership, Chair Tony Hester and Vice Chair Sawyer Stearns. We are beginning our planning for Advocacy Day which occurs on April 2, 2027. To start the process a roles and responsibilities sheet was created and will be available for sign-up when the proper infrastructure is completed. A tentative timeline was developed to keep us on task and ensure we reach our objectives in a timely fashion.

Our committee intends to merge efforts with the Outreach and Education and Youth Committees. The purpose of the merger is in response to the low number of personnel on each committee and the large workload each committee undertakes. Each committee remains independent; however, we are combining our efforts to meet goals required to move the council forward. Part of these efforts include recruitment; the committee has begun strategizing on ways to recruit members to individual committees and the council as a whole. Some strategies being discussed are focusing on rural communities, the tribal community, and reaching professionals that often come in contact with people with disabilities.

The Legislative Committee is also working with Jim House and CIEP to educate our legislators on the work he does and its value to the disability community. We are working with Jim to find the best approaches to highlight the features that make his program impactful and necessary. We hope to have a viable plan for this endeavor in the very near future.



**Washington
Statewide
Independent
Living Council**

Committee Report: WASILC Education and Outreach Committee

Date: June 2026

Chair: Dion Graham

Co-Chair: Hanna Adira

The Education and Outreach Subcommittee educates the public and advocates for Washington's Independent Living philosophy, the Independent Living Network, and the State Plan for Independent Living through its outreach efforts.

1. What have we done?

In March, we held a community session called Share Your Story on “The Invisible Wall” to identify people interested in joining a virtual panel. We emphasized that WASILC is here to listen, not just speak. The session helped begin a conversation with people with disabilities about their lived experiences in preparation for a larger cross-disability panel in April.

Our March topic was “**The Invisible Wall: Navigating Public Space.**” We discussed not only physical barriers—such as stairs without ramps or narrow doorways—but also the *invisible* barriers people encounter, including:

- Overwhelming noise or lighting in public buildings.
- A lack of clear signage or ASL access during a crisis.
- Assumptions about what people with disabilities can or cannot do.

Participants were encouraged to share their experiences to help inform our advocacy with the Governor’s Office and shape our 2026 goals.

In April, we hosted a virtual panel titled “**Elevating Cross-Disability Voices in Washington,**” featuring panelists who shared the strategies and “life-hacks” they use to stay independent and safe. Our goal was to show policymakers and community leaders the value of lived experience in shaping how agencies respond to community needs during crises.

Examples of questions:

1. **Identity:** What is your disability, and what expertise or “life-hacks” from your lived experience help you navigate the world independently?
2. **Autonomy:** What strategies, tools, technology, or habits help you keep your world accessible and maintain your independence each day?
3. **Community:** What resource you rely on—or barrier you face—should others understand to help make our communities fully inclusive?
4. **Resilience/Crisis:** In a crisis, what is the first step you take to protect your safety and self-direction if your usual support is unavailable?

These discussions showed how disability ingenuity helps people develop problem-solving skills based on their own lived experience and needs.

Participants described tools, technology, and daily habits that support their independence.

We also discussed community gaps created by systemic barriers to inclusion.

- Self-Directed Safety: Taking the lead in personal crisis response.
- Peer Networks: Relying on mutual aid when systems fall short.

2. How does this help our community?

This work helps people with disabilities in Washington live more independently by:

- Focus on Lived Expertise: Shifting from the "medical model" to the expertise of lived experience.

- "Nothing About Us Without Us": Moving past policies built for us, without our input.
- Elevate cross-disability voices often sidelined in safety conversations.
- Provide a platform for disabled leaders to share expertise, educate partners, and build authentic understanding of living independently in Washington.

What's next?

The expertise shared is exactly what should be driving our state's policies. The Washington Statewide Independent Living Council is required by the federal government to create a three-year state plan to address the needs of people with disabilities in our state. Our **State Plan for Independent Living** (SPIL) is drafted by our council members with input from the community at several stages of its development.

- The Education and Outreach Committee encourages everyone participating and/or listening to help us write their "life-hacks" and community gaps into the official roadmap for Washington's future by signing up for a **SPIL Feedback Session**.



**Washington
Statewide
Independent
Living Council**

Youth and Young Adult committee

Over the last quarter, the Youth Committee has focused on strengthening systemic alignments, optimizing our messaging, and maximizing our collective impact. By centering our efforts on high-level collaborations and resource sharing, we have identified critical programmatic intersection points that have led to a strategic structural pivot for the committee moving forward.

Key Activities & Focus Areas

- **ESD Engagement & Collaboration:** Our primary focus this quarter has been active participation and collaboration with **Educational Service Districts (ESDs)**. These meetings have been vital for aligning our cross-disability youth initiatives with regional educational frameworks and systemic pipelines.
- **Resource and Information Sharing:** The committee has successfully developed and distributed targeted resources, ensuring that independent living philosophy and youth-centric information are reaching partners, advocates, and families efficiently.

Strategic Transition: Merging with the Legislative Committee

Notice of Structural Realignment: Moving into the next quarter, the Youth Committee has begun the process of merging with the **Legislative Committee**.

This transition is driven by two primary factors:

1. **Capacity Maximization:** Aligning our volunteer and staff capacity ensures we are not duplicating administrative efforts and can apply our energy more effectively.
2. **Strategic Messaging Alignment:** The core messaging the Youth Committee is communicating—specifically around systemic advocacy, youth transition, and long-term equity—inherently overlaps with our legislative and policy goals.

By unifying these two committees, we will create a singular, robust advocacy front that ensures youth perspectives are deeply embedded into our upcoming legislative strategy and policy rollouts.



Update for the Statewide Independent Living Council July 2026

Next quarterly meeting will be August 13th & 14th, 2026

- Hybrid meeting held in Wenatchee (Location TBD)
- Meeting agenda will available [website](#) on our 2-3 weeks prior to the meeting.
- Please reach out to [Jolie Ramsey](#) if you have any questions.

Council Recruitment –

We are currently recruiting a dynamic representative to be the “*voice of business*” on the council as a Business or Labor Representative. We are looking for a business owner, executive, supervisor, or employee who can provide perspective on opportunities to strengthen coordination around workforce opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

If you are interested in learning more about the opportunity to serve or know someone who may be interested, please go to the "[Become a Council Member](#)" page and reach out to [council staff](#).

Center: Disability Action Center Northeast Washington (DAC NEW)

Region: Spokane, Stevens, Ferry, Pend Oreille and Lincoln

1. The Pulse of Our Community

What is the current reality for people with disabilities in your specific neck of the woods?

- **Top-of-Mind Issues:**

- Many Eastern Washington communities, particularly in older or rural towns, suffer from incomplete, cracked, or entirely absent sidewalks. Missing curb cuts force wheelchair users and those with mobility aids into active roadways. The estimated population of Chewelah, WA in 2026 ranges from approximately 2,600 to 2,760 with roughly 13.1% to 19.9% of the population in surrounding Stevens County living with a disability. During the Summer of 2025, the Washington State Department of Transportation began an improvement project on U.S. 395 in Chewelah and north of the town in Stevens County. This project was expanded the Summer of 2026. The goal of this project is to rehabilitate a 5-mile stretch of U.S. 395 between Hafer Road and Sand Canyon Road north of Chewelah, which goes through the heart of the City of Chewelah. These improvements follow the state's Complete Streets requirements and it's on track to be the first Complete Streets project constructed by WSDOT since the legislation came out in July 2022. Eventually this project will extend across the entire state.
- Whitman, Asotin, and Garfield counties in SE WA are still working to recover from the collapse of a major service provider for elderly and people with disabilities. Transportation services are being re-built by People for People, a transportation company out of Yakima. Food bank and home delivered meal services in Whitman county are being held together by a couple of other entities. DAC-NID (North Idaho and SE WA) of DAC-NW has been working with the transportation folks to support those services.

- **The "Gap" We're Filling:**

- There is a pronounced urban-rural divide in Eastern Washington, characterized by a lack of in-network Medicaid providers. Families routinely face long waiting lists for Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers. Finding direct support professionals (DSPs) to provide in-home respite care is difficult due to low state reimbursement rates. People with disabilities in Eastern Washington experience a significantly wider employment gap and lower average earnings compared to non-disabled peers, compounded by a lack of accessible transportation in rural areas. Despite significant efforts and strong advocacy, people with disabilities in Eastern Washington still navigate complex systemic barriers to achieve full economic, social, and civic inclusion, with

ongoing needs for better technology, transport, and integrated support systems. DAC NEW of DAC-NW helps fill these gaps through consistent ongoing grassroots level work focusing on our five core areas.

2. Our Role as a Systems Navigator

Highlight how you are influencing the "big machines" (Healthcare, Housing, Transit) in your area.

- **Seat at the Table:**

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Accessible Web Content and Mobile Apps Working Group | 16. HB 1477 Lived Experience Collaborative |
| 2. APRIL - Advocacy Committee Meeting | 17. HMIS Committee |
| 3. APRIL - Emergency Planning Committee | 18. Human Growth & Development Citizen Advisory Committee (Spokane Public Schools - SPS) |
| 4. APRIL - Transportation Advocacy Committee | 19. Later in Life/Vulnerable Adult Task Force |
| 5. APRIL - Youth Coordinators Connect | 20. NE FYSPRT - Northeast Family Youth System Partner Round Table |
| 6. Champion Generosity Nonprofit Monthly Gathering | 21. Prevent Suicide Spokane Coalition |
| 7. Coffee with SPS | 22. Shaping Spokane Together |
| 8. Community Voices Council | 23. Spinal Cord Injury Peer Support Group |
| 9. Cross Disability Advocacy Network (CDAN) | 24. Spokane Behavioral Health Forum (OBHA) |
| 10. Diversity, Equity, and Global Awareness (DEGA) Committee | 25. Spokane Homeless Coalition |
| 11. Disability Access and Functional Needs (DAFN) - Spokane County | 26. Spokane Housing Committee |
| 12. Disability-Access and Functional Needs Planning (Statewide) | 27. Spokane Outreach Networking Group (S.O.N.G.) |
| 13. Eastern WA CHW Networking meetings (Better Health Together) | 28. Spokane Valley Homeless Housing Task Force |
| 14. Emergency CIEP meetings (Washington) | 29. Stevens County Coalition (Rural Resources) |
| 15. Greater Valley Support Network | 30. Stevens County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) |

31. Stevens County Homeless
Housing Taskforce
(SCHHTF)

32. Washington State DOH
Collaborative

33. Washington State
Independent Living Council
(WASILC)

34. West Spokane Wellness
Coalition

- **Shifting the Landscape:** DAC NEW continues to function as an informal resource hub as well as a bridge between needed service providers and community members. DAC NEW frequently partners with local organizations and advocacy events to reduce barriers. This includes DAC NEW and DAC NID hosting our premiere event - Bridging Communities Celebration, which is our annual event in Spokane's Riverfront Park celebrating the Americans with Disabilities Act. DAC NEW is also a vendor, promoting and attending Operational Connection 2026, which focuses on emergency preparedness, planning seminars, and connecting first responders with the disability community to ensure inclusive safety strategies.

3. Cultivating Peer Leadership

This demonstrates your role in building "Disability Power" rather than just "helping" people.

- **Movement Building:** DAC NEW serves a large urban center that is surrounded by an expansive historically underserved rural area. Our Community Fishing Peer Group continues to welcome those with disabilities across our region. On June 23rd, DAC NEW will collaborate with Central Washington Disability Resources in offering a Community Fishing Event at Moses Lake in Grant County. Our D&D Gaming peer group has brought together individuals with disabilities in a social online setting where they create their own story telling while learning how to interact and connect with others.
- **Consumer Voice:** Community members living in Eastern Washington region continue to not feel heard by the larger populated areas on the west side of this state. This sentiment is a well-documented and long-standing issue rooted in the significant cultural, economic, and political divide between the eastern and western portions of the state. Consumer voice is brought to the table through the long list of system advocacy meetings. Major points of contention include policies related to issues such as firearms, taxes, environmental regulations, housing, and homelessness, where systemic belief systems and worldviews widely differ across the Cascade Mountains. This is a common problem with many states that have very different regions. It points to an ongoing need to openly communicate and work to understand each area's unique challenges to ensure flexibility in responding to needs.

4. Strategic Partnerships & Local Synergy

Who is looking to the CIL as an expert?

- **Primary Allies:** We continue to work closely with ALTCEW, Arc of Spokane, Odyssey Youth Movement, Futurewise, Spokane Public Schools, Rural Resources, Spokane Transit Authority, Special Mobility Services, NEW Alliance, DVR, DDCA (formally DDA), CDAN, DAFN, CVC, Spokane OBHA, NE-FYSPRT and many others. In SE WA we connect with Asotin County social services and others, and we are actively connecting with the court systems to ensure people with a disability have access to transitional services and others.
- **New Connections:** Staff have recently began attending Coffee with SPS (Spokane Public Schools). This once a month gathering provides an opportunity for All community members to meet with district leaders in an informal environment. This allows DAC NEW staff to provide the second largest school district in the state an opportunity to share areas of need as well as ways that DAC NEW can provide support for youth transition. DAC NEW has also began a partnership with Manzanita House providing training and consumer services to refugees and immigrants. Manzanita House provides interpreters to aid in communication and understanding.

5. High-Level Impact Statement

Our Regional Identity: In the northeast corner of Washington State, DAC NEW works together with community partners to raise the voices of the disability community including those most marginalized – rural residents, BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, immigrants, refugees, and those experiencing poverty. As an organization run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, DAC NEW provides peer counseling, skills training, support and mentoring. We are focused on providing a bridge between rural and urban areas of Eastern Washington. We serve five northeastern counties: Spokane, Pend Oreille, Lincoln, Ferry, and Stevens.

Three south eastern WA counties are served by DAC-NID, the northern Idaho grant program that has always crossed over to support these border counties that are unserved by any Washington IL funding source. DAC-NID provides all core IL services in these counties. As with all of our sparsely populated rural areas, service provision is very challenging. In the DAC-NW veteran-directed care program, staff may spend as long as four hours on the road to meet with a single customer.

CWDR Service Counties

Kittitas, Yakima, Grant, Chelan and Douglas



Our Office Locations

- **Ellensburg Office:**
2009 W Dolarway Rd, Suite
101, Ellensburg, WA 98926
- **Yakima Office:**
17 N 3rd St, Suite 101, Yakima,
WA 98901

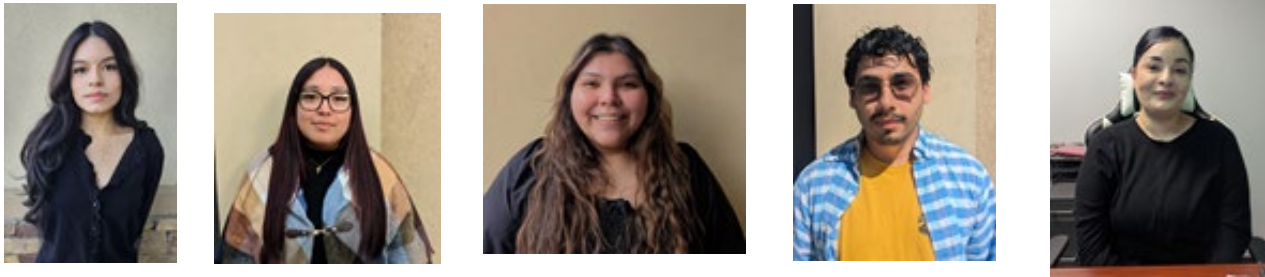
Meet the staff

Ellensburg



Mayra Colazo,	Jaelyn McMahan,	Monica Self	Dan Witkowski,	Yazmin Andrade	Charlie Gimlin,	Terence Paddlety,	Devin Shea,
Executive Director	Program Manager	Office Assistant	Health and Wellness Coordinator	Independent Living Specialist 1	Independent Living Specialist 3	Veteran Coach	Youth Transition Coordinator

Yakima



Jessica Melchor,	Alexandria Minthorn-Jaime,	Kenia Morales,	Oscar Reyes,	Joanna Arrendondo,
Office Assistant	Independent Living Specialist 2	Independent Living Specialist 4/ Outreach Coordinator	Systems Advocate	Independent Living Specialist 5



Appendix



CAP

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WASHINGTON

CAP helps you understand Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services

Who is CAP?

CAP is a free, non-profit advocacy program funded by the Federal Government under the 1973 Rehabilitation Act as amended

We serve applicants and customers of:

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)
- Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Advocacy

- Information, referral, and support with self advocacy
- Engage in Individual and Systemic advocacy to improve overall VR customer satisfaction, service delivery and employment outcomes
- Help resolve case issues through collaborative problem solving and informal dispute resolution
- CAP is required to resolve issues at the lowest possible level before representing a customer in an administrative, legal or other appropriate option

What we do

- Explain VR services, policies and procedures
- Help you understand and navigate the VR process
- Provide information about your rights and responsibilities
- Offer assistance when there are communication difficulties
- Describe VR assessments and service providers, ex. Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), Community Based Assessments (CBA), psychological evaluations, etc.
- Explain your rights and options if you reach an impasse or disagree with a decision
- Clarify how State and Federal VR laws apply to your case

Contact us to learn more

Voice/Text: 206-849-2939

washingtoncap2@gmail.com

<http://washingtoncap.org>

Please contact us to request an accommodation if needed