



Washington
Statewide
Independent
Living Council

WASILC July Quarterly Meeting

July 9th, 2026

9am To 4pm

Council Members Present:

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

Leslie Erickson, Advocate of and for Individuals with Disabilities,

Council Staff Present:

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

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

Guest Presenters:

Jen Bean, Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Shelby Satko, Executive Director Washington State Rehabilitation Council

Kim Canaan, Program Manager, Department Services for the Blind (DSB)

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

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 October 2026 Agenda

First: Leslie Erickson

Second: Tony Hester

Vote: Favor: All

Opposed: None

APPROVED

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: Sue Pniweski

Vote: Favor: All

Opposed: None

APPROVED

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR):

Pablo Villarreal, Interim Director

Leadership & Organizational Updates

- **Interim Director Appointment:** Pablo Villarreal was appointed Interim Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) on April 16th, succeeding Dana following her move to the Assistant Secretary role for the newly formed DBA.
- **Experience:** Villarreal brings 23 years at DVR and 25–26 years in state service, with prior experience as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Rehab Supervisor, Region 1 Administrator, and Assistant Director for Workforce & Youth.
- **Interim Supervision Restructure:** Direct supervision of staff (Melinda Bocci, Sam Blazaina, Jeannine Chandler, and Larisa Wulfekuhle) across Pre-ETS, transition, and business engagement teams has temporarily shifted to Anne Martin.

Strategic Vision & Priorities

- **Staff & Processes:** Aiming to make DVR an employer of choice through career development, training, simplified internal processes, and reduced administrative burdens.
- **Employer Engagement & Wages:** Focus on increasing participant median wages by supplying counselors with better labor market data, refining Community Rehab Program contract language, and collaborating with local Workforce Development Councils (e.g., Kennewick region).
- **Statewide Collaboration:** Strengthening partnerships with OSPI, DBA, school districts, and local counties.

Federal, National, and Partner Updates

- **Federal Budget & OSERS Transfer:** Monitoring potential federal cuts to the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and Supported Employment. OSERS/RSA administration is transferring from the Department of Education to the Department of Health and Human Services, with no immediate impact on funding or operations.
- **CCER Closure:** The closure of the Center for Continuing Education and Rehabilitation creates a regional gap in technical assistance and staff training; DVR is exploring replacement programs.
- **Tribal VR Partnerships:** Completed the first year of state-legislated employment support funding for Tribal VR partners; focus shifts to expanding infrastructure and funding usage in year two.

Order of Selection & Waitlist Status

- **Waitlist Releases:** Resumed June 9th with an initial release of 77–79 participants, opening a 90-day window to build Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs). A second release of ~100 participants is set for August 3rd, with plans for ongoing monthly releases based on capacity and funding.
- **Priority of Service Re-alignment:** Federal mandates require DVR to simplify its 5-category priority structure down to 3 categories (No Significant Disability, Significant Disability, Most Significant Disability) by the end of Program Year 2027 (October 2028).

Performance & WIOA Negotiated Targets

- **Monitoring:** Standardizing monthly business reviews to track WIOA metrics, rehab rates, and timeliness, along with quarterly tracking of 2nd/4th quarter employment retention.

- **PY 2026–2027 Performance Benchmarks:**
 - **2nd Quarter Employment Rate:** 48% (PY26) → 48.1% (PY27)
 - **4th Quarter Employment Rate:** 45% (PY26) → 45.1% (PY27)
 - **2nd Quarter Median Earnings:** Target set at \$4,400 (aiming to grow to \$4,500).

Legislative & Workforce Board Representation

- Villarreal continues to represent DSHS on the Workforce Education and Training Board.
- **DVR Legislative Priorities:** Top decision packages submitted for legislative consideration include continued funding for Centers for Independent Living (CILs), ongoing support for CIEP, and a placeholder for the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

Executive Director report – Courtney Williams

Regional Emergency Management Outreach

- **Trainings Executed:** Regional emergency management outreach trainings were completed in Eastern Washington (Yakima and Spokane) during May and June, targeting structurally underfunded areas for inclusive infrastructure. Facilitated by Susan Pniewski and Jim House.
- **Cross-Disability & Community Integration:** Brought together local emergency managers, public health staff, law enforcement, firefighters, city/county experts, and community members with lived experience (including individuals utilizing assistive technology) to

move emergency management from reactive triage to proactive inclusion.

- **Call to Action:** Council is seeking input on expanding outreach to underrepresented cross-disability, Tribal, and BIPOC communities.

Data Advocacy & Mapping Project

- **Project Status:** Formal data mapping project (pursued since February to track hyper-local disability trends against public assistance populations) is currently delayed due to state-level budget cuts affecting partner funding.
- **Objectives & Scalability:** Aims to eliminate regional service gaps by moving away from generalized state-level data. Plans include piloting in urbanized centers and rural counties to build baseline data for future WASILC decision packages and funding allocations.

CIEP Funding & Deficit Planning

- **Immediate Intervention:** Department of Health (DOH) baseline funding was lost, threatening the continuity of the Community Inclusion and Emergency Preparedness (CIEP) program. DVR stepped in immediately to cover the financial shortfall and maintain program operations.
- **Long-Term Strategy:** Reliance on temporary emergency funding from DVR is unsustainable given broader state budget pressures. WASILC will host a dedicated, full-day strategic planning session in November or December to establish permanent funding solutions for CIEP.

Council Operations & Committee Restructure

- **Meeting Cadence:** New council members requested more frequent, consistent updates between quarterly meetings to maintain alignment and receive monthly training (conducted in compliance with Public Meetings Act rules).
- **Committee Mergers:** To streamline workflows ahead of the legislative session, the **Youth Committee** and **Education & Outreach Committee** are merging into the **Legislative & Advocacy Committee** (co-chaired by Sawyer Sterns and Tony Hester).
- **Legislative Advocacy Day:** Scheduled for **April 2nd** in the Columbia Room at the State Capitol; community advocate recruitment and narrative development are underway.

Fiscal Environment & Policy Landscape

- **20% State Agency Budget Cuts:** State agencies have been directed by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to prepare for potential 20% budget cuts. WASILC highlighted that across-the-board cuts disproportionately harm individuals with disabilities relying on life-sustaining services (noting Washington's low national rankings for disability and mental health funding).
- **Olmstead Compliance:** Emphasized that state-level budget cuts risk weakening community-based safety nets, which creates legal exposure under Title II of the ADA / *Olmstead* integration mandate by forcing individuals back into institutional settings.
- **SPIL Development:** The State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) committee—comprising WASILC representatives, CIL executive

directors, and DSB representatives—is actively evaluating community feedback and structural realities to draft the upcoming state plan

Treasurers Report – Tony Hester

- 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

Public Comment

JOHN ROMANO: Sure. My name is John Romano at Disaster Central and we are advocates. My question is related to if anything is being done right now in the way of planning by the SPIL. Again, I can't speak to when the SPIL committee meets for the next statewide independent living plan, but is there any facilitation in the way any formal process going on in strategic planning, given the fact that we are advancing towards a whole new

environment of fiscal cutbacks and things like that? I'm just wondering if the committee has been assembled for any strategic planning done along that line.

COURTNEY WILLIAMS: Good question. I'm going to thank you for that question. The answer, the short answer is yes. You will hear a little bit more about our timeline at report out from the SPIL committee chair Kimberly Meck today, but I will say the other part is we have a survey going right now and then we have community feedback sessions. The first one is actually today from 1 to 2, it's actually during this meeting. And Rebecca will put the list of the others and we will factor that in with how we are compiling that state plan to truly reflect truly reflect the community's needs. So be part of those and Rebecca will put that in the chat box. The other thing which is really exciting and I was told last cycle. I'm not saying this to post because it's not me, but it was a capacity issue. We didn't have folks attend the feedbacks sessions. It was a struggle and very few people have done the survey. We have exceeded survey responses and we have been doing this we launched it two weeks ago. That's because our community is engaged and sharing. So keep doing that. And more to come, but I think you will get a lot of your questions answered, Doug, today, and if not, let's recalibrate and make sure we're addressing those questions. How does that sound?

JOHN ROMANO: This is John, you're referring to Doug?

COURTNEY WILLIAMS: No, I was referring to you. Did I say Doug? Sorry.

JOHN ROMANO: Yes, you said Doug. Sorry.

COURTNEY WILLIAMS: Sorry.

JOHN ROMANO: And I think that's critical, really getting input from as early as possible and as deep as possible when it comes to getting opinions because, again, you know, you're only as good as your own situational awareness. And if you don't get good reliable input, you know, about the current situation, as it is, and how it's impacting people with disabilities, it's important. And I know you understand this. Courtney sampling and get a wide sampling of people.

COURTNEY WILLIAMS: Yeah, thank you so much. And when our report happens make sure in the questions aren't asked, ask away. I appreciate your feedback. I will pass it over to Kimberly. I know we are over time. Thank you, everybody, for your patience and if we have more questions, let's put them in the chat box and we will get back to them when we get back from break. Kimberly.

Client Assistant Program and Standing Committee Report Outs

Client Assistant Program (CAP)- Douglas Burkhalter

Leadership & Program Background

- **Presenters & Leadership:** Doug Burkhalter (Assistant Director, 5 years at CAP after 25 years at DVR) presented on behalf of Director Jen Bean (over 9 years at CAP, 20 years at DVR), who was absent due to a family emergency.
- **Institutional Foundation:** Both leaders were former DVR Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors, Rehab Technicians, and trainers who

align with former long-time director Jerry Johnsen's philosophy:

"Vocational rehabilitation is Civil Rights in action."

- **Organizational Structure:** Operated as a two-person team running a non-profit organization to provide independent advocacy.

Program Mandate & Scope of Services

- **Funding & Oversight Agencies:** Funded under WIOA and the Rehab Act via RSA, CAP advocates for applicants and participants across:
 - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
 - Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)
 - 13–14 Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs in Washington State
 - Independent Living (IL) Centers
- **Dual Advocacy Framework:**
 - **Systemic Advocacy:** Serves on statewide councils (WSRC, SRCB, SILC) to identify systemic trends, service delivery bottlenecks, and communication gaps gathered from over 1,400 annual participant inquiries, relaying best practices back to agency leadership.
 - **Individual Advocacy:** Empowers clients with information regarding rights, responsibilities, and timeline expectations (e.g., 90-day IPE development windows) while translating dense government acronyms (CBA, CRP, etc.).

Operational Approach & Best Practices

- **Relationship-Based Model:** Unlike CAP programs in other states run by legal advocacy networks focused on litigation, Washington's CAP uses a counselor-led, relationship-first approach to resolve issues directly with service providers before escalating.
- **Lowest-Level Resolution:** Mandated to solve issues at the lowest possible tier through self-advocacy coaching, direct line-staff dialogue, and supervisor referrals.
- **Scope Limits:** CAP advocates strictly for compliance with federal and state laws/policies—not for arbitrary client demands—and does not handle agency personnel/personnel attitude complaints.
- **Confidentiality & Access:** CAP holds no direct access to state VR case management databases and only investigates or contacts case staff after obtaining a signed information release from the participant.

Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP) – Jim House

Programs & Outreach

- **Regional Outreach Trainings:** Jim's team successfully launched outreach trainings in Yakima and Spokane, driving strong engagement from individuals who had not previously connected with the program; extensive follow-up efforts are underway.
- **Community Emergency Planning:** Actively connecting with local communities to support them in establishing their own community roundtable discussions on emergency planning.

- **After-Action Report:** Significant time and work are currently being directed toward completing the program's after-action report.

National Recognition & Presentation

- **NCIL Conference Selection:** Jim and Courtney were selected to present at the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) conference in Washington, D.C.
- **Presentation Focus:** The session, titled *"Navigating Advocacy to Empower Those with Lived Experience,"* leverages Jim's extensive knowledge in the field.
- **Local Knowledge Sharing:** Plans are in place to re-present this conference content locally for Washington State stakeholders following the D.C. event.

Executive Committee- Kimberly Meck, Chair

Approve new council member: Dani Rice

Motion: I move to approve Danny as a councilmember.

First: Tony Hester

Second: Leslie Erickson

Vote: Favor: All

Opposed: None

APPROVED

Approve add additional council meetings

Motion: add additional meetings.

First: Sue Pniewski

Second: Tony Hester

Vote: Favor: All

Opposed: None

APPROVED

OMB Proposed Rulemaking

- **Context:** The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) posted a ~430-page Notice of Proposed Rulemaking aimed at consolidating and codifying executive orders from early in the presidency.
- **Public Comments:** Due **July 13, 2026**.
- **Action & Strategy:** NCIL is drafting a network-wide public comment, but individual submissions are strongly encouraged. Public comments establish the administrative record necessary to build groundwork for future legal challenges.
- **Expected Litigation:** While NCIL is not planning litigation, legal actions from other entities are anticipated, with hopes of securing a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) to halt the rule changes. Fact sheets from the National Council of Nonprofits and AAHD offer concise overviews.

FY 2027 Labor-HHS Appropriations

- **General ACL Programs:** Most Administration for Community Living (ACL) programs avoided cuts and maintained flat-level funding compared to FY 2026.
- **NIDILRR Defunding:** The **National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)** was completely zeroed out in the FY 2027 bill. This single elimination accounts for the ~\$1 million difference between the FY26 and FY27 ACL budget totals.
- **Next Steps:** Advocacy efforts will focus heavily on reinstating NIDILRR funding as the budget progresses.

Program Performance Report (PPR) Updates

- **Work Group Focus:** Two ACL work groups are actively updating PPR forms—one tailored for Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and another for Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs).
- **Shift to Systemic Data:** Reporting is shifting away from purely individual service counts to capture broader systemic advocacy, community impact, and "greater good" initiatives.
- **Rollout Timeline:**
 - **2027 PPR:** Pilot test with a small work group.
 - **2028 PPR:** Full permanent implementation across the network.

Legislative & Policy Committee – Tony Hester & Sawyer Stearns

Committee Leadership & Restructure

- **New Co-Chairs:** The Legislative Committee has transitioned leadership, with new chairs taking over due to recent council structural changes (co-chairing with Sawyer).
- **Joint Committee Integration:** Plans are taking shape to merge standing committees (such as Youth and Education & Outreach) under one unified Legislative Committee, with subcommittees handling specific operational areas. The chairs are seeking feedback from the broader council to ensure a smooth transition.

Advocacy Day 2027 Planning

- **Sign-Up & Infrastructure:** A sign-up tool and roles/responsibilities breakdown (including tentative timelines) have been created.

Deployment to council and subcommittee members is pending final administrative infrastructure setup.

- **Key Volunteer Roles:** Identified key operational duties, including District Captains, Marketing Leads, Webinar Facilitators, and On-Site Staff for the Columbia Room at the Capitol.
- **Educational Materials & Talking Points:** Collaborating with Jim to draft talking points and educational collateral focusing on the value of his program, emergency preparedness, and WASILC's overall statewide mission.

Targeted Outreach & Council Recruitment

- **Expanding Diversity & Reach:** Initiated recruitment strategies to bring new perspectives into the council and legislative committee, targeting rural regions, Tribal communities, BIPOC populations, and other disenfranchised groups.
- **Professional Engagement:** Expanding outreach to professionals who work directly with people with disabilities to build a stronger pipeline of community advocates.

Education & Outreach – Hannah Adira

Youth & Young Adult – Courtney Williams

Table discussion on merging committees

Motion: I move to table the discussion on merging the subcommittees into the legislative committee until further notice through email.

First: Tony Hester

Second: Leslie Erickson

Vote: Favor: All

Opposed: None

APPROVED

SPIL Feedback Session

Community Feedback & Discussion

- **Participant Input:** Rhonda Edwards expressed frustration with eligibility barriers for individuals with higher usability levels, while Dennis Smiley voiced concerns about digital access and federal age verification policies threatening independence.
- **Local Systems & Partnerships:** Todd Holloway raised the importance of partnering with local coalitions (e.g., street accessibility projects in Tacoma) to capture ground-level gaps and successes.
- **SPIL Administration & Lifecycle:** Kimberly Meck and John Romano discussed the year-long SPIL drafting process, noting that the final plan functions as a continually evaluated, living document rather than a static report.

Core Discussion Points

- **Individualized Services vs. Systemic Goals:** Rhonda Edwards raised concerns about services meeting specific individual/family needs rather than taking a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Kimberly Meck explained that while local Centers for Independent Living (CILs)—such as Central Washington Disability Resources (CWDR) in Ellensburg—provide direct, individualized services, the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) focuses on broad, statewide system goals like accessible transportation and inclusive emergency planning.

- **Addressing Local CIL Issues:** In response to Rhonda's feedback regarding mixed experiences with local center responsiveness, Kimberly noted that CILs operate as independent entities. Local service concerns must be addressed directly with the executive director (Mayra Colazo at CWDR) rather than resolved at the state council level.
- **Cross-Disability Advocacy & Unity:** Courtney Williams reinforced that effective advocacy requires unifying all cross-disability communities to present a complete picture to decision-makers, preventing "robbing Peter to pay Paul" budget cuts and living up to the principle of "nothing about us without us".
- **Federal Legislative Milestone:** Todd Holloway highlighted the passage of the federal Reforming Disaster Recovery Act (RDRA). Key benefits and context include:
 - **Housing & CDBG-DR Codification:** Codifies Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) through HUD to ensure long-term funding for housing rebuilds and infrastructure after FEMA assistance ends.
 - **Accessibility Support:** Doubles funding support for replacing accessible equipment and making homes accessible post-disaster.
 - **Local Impact:** Incorporates lessons learned from Washington state's recent atmospheric river disaster and Disability Access & Functional Needs (AFN) reporting.

Partner Reports

Department of Services for the Blind- Tricia Eyerly

Independent Living Program Overview

- **Core Services:** Helps individuals who are blind or low vision build foundational skills for daily life—such as doing laundry, paying bills, using phones, grocery shopping, and navigating home environments safely and independently.

Virtual Training Pilot ("VISION")

- **Format & Schedule:** Launching this September as an 8-lesson virtual pilot program led by Independent Living providers.
- **Topics Covered:** Maximizing senses, using low-vision devices and tools, coping with the emotional impact of vision loss, labeling/organization techniques, and adaptive clothing care.
- **Recruitment Need:** The program is actively seeking participants. Interested individuals can reach out to **Kimberly or Courtney** to get connected.

Long-Term Satisfaction Survey Outcomes

- **Survey Scope:** Conducted phone follow-ups with ~60 participants (out of a target pool of 400+) 6 months to 1 year post-service.
- **Key Results:**
 - **81%** feel better control and confidence in maintaining their current living situation.

- **73%** feel better able to participate in family, friends, and community life.
- **73%** feel more in control of important life decisions.
- **71%** report feeling less dependent on others.
- **62%** feel more confident performing activities despite vision loss.
- **Context:** Immediately after case closure, satisfaction rates hover around **95%**. The lower long-term figures reflect rapid health/vision changes among participants, the majority of whom are **80 years or older**.

Provider Annual Retreat

- **Format Shift:** Moving to a virtual format across several half-day sessions over multiple weeks to avoid online burnout and adapt to funding delays.
- **Focus Areas:** Training for ~17 providers focusing on mental health & burnout, motivational interviewing, ageism & ableism, home visit safety, and supporting clients with combined vision and hearing loss.

Washington State Rehabilitation Council- Shelby Satko

SRC Mandate & Statutory Foundation

- **Legal Establishment:** Established under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended by WIOA) to advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) on customer satisfaction, policy, programs, and performance.

- **Dual SRC System:** Washington State operates two distinct State Rehabilitation Councils: the SRC serving DVR, and a separate council serving the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB).

Upcoming August Quarterly Meeting (Wenatchee)

- **Schedule & Hybrid Format:** Main meeting dates set for Thursday, August 13 (full day) and Friday, August 14 (half day) in Wenatchee.
- **Site Tour (Aug 12):** Pre-meeting tour of the newly consolidated SkillSource Learning Center and WorkSource location.
- **Day 1 Focus (Aug 13):**
 - Leadership & fiscal updates from DVR Interim Director Pablo Villarreal.
 - Customer listening session reports focusing on participants in the Omak and Wenatchee regional offices.
 - Presentations on youth transition services and workforce integration partnerships in collaboration with SkillSource (the local Workforce Development Board).
- **Day 2 Focus (Aug 14):** Council-focused business, including the election of officers, setting the 2027 meeting schedule, and open community updates.

Transition Collaborative Report

- **Listening Sessions:** Conducted 4 listening sessions gathering input from over 240 participants (including CIL and SILC members) regarding the current state and future of youth transition services.
- **Legislative Delivery:** Feedback is being integrated into a formal report undergoing review through OSPI and internal government

relations, targeted for release to the legislature prior to October/December.

Policy & Legal Monitoring

- **DOJ Olmstead Legal Opinion:** Monitoring a recent Department of Justice legal opinion regarding *Olmstead* interpretations, raising concerns over potential shifts toward institutionalization for individuals with mental illness.
- **Federal Realignment & Medicaid:** Tracking Department of Education/RSA organizational shifts and emerging Medicaid work requirement implementations affecting statewide disability populations.

Washington State Governors Council on Disabilities- Elizabeth Gordon

Medicaid Work Requirements & Public Comment

- **Lived-Experience Feedback:** Following presentations at recent general membership meetings, the committee hosted its first listening sessions to gather lived-experience feedback on the proposed Medicaid work requirements.
- **AG Review:** Public comments are being compiled and will undergo review by the State Attorney General before formal submission. Future efforts will aim to expand this listening session model to reach broader public audiences.

Digital Equity & Technology Inclusion

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Joined a new subcommittee of the Digital Equity Forum focusing on government and private-sector collaboration.
- **Accessible Emerging Tech:** Advocating to ensure emerging technologies—specifically AI and workplace tools—are designed with accessibility and disabled community needs in mind from the outset.

Accessible Communities Grants

- **\$200,000 Awarded:** Finalized contracting for roughly \$200,000 in community accessibility grants across Washington State.
- **Featured Project:** Includes funding for a community disability guide highlighting accessible hiking trails statewide (details available on the website).

Immigration Sub-Cabinet Collaboration

- **Disability Rights Guide:** Collaborating with Mayra on a disability subcommittee to draft a Washington State guide clarifying disability rights during immigration procedures.
- **Addressing Community Fear:** Designed to directly address community concerns regarding communication barriers and navigate support for children or adults with disabilities during immigration processes.

Workplace Employment & State Hiring Initiatives

- **Workplace Discrimination Guide:** The new Employment Work Group (chaired by Brit Nuckles) completed a resource guide for

employees experiencing workplace discrimination and is developing a simplified guide for employers.

- **State Employment Executive Order:** Entering year two of implementing the State Employment Executive Order, which focuses on:
 - **Manager Training:** Launching inclusive environment training grounded in the Independent Living philosophy (viewing accessibility as an environment fix rather than fixing the individual).
 - **Career Advancement:** Promoting both state-level hiring and internal promotion pathways to prevent disabled employees from getting stuck in entry-level roles.

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)

Geographic Scope

- **Idaho Base:** Receives primary grant funding through Idaho to cover its regional operations.
- **Washington Coverage:** Serves Eastern Washington counties—including Asotin, Garfield, and Whitman—and expanded in 2021 to include five northeastern Washington counties (Spokane, Spokane Valley urban areas, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln, and Ferry).

Core Services & Specialized Programs

- **Five Core IL Services:**

1. Individual & Systemic Advocacy: Empowering individuals and driving community accessibility.
2. Peer Counseling & Connections: Facilitating peer-to-peer sharing and support networks.
3. Independent Living Skills Training: Developing daily self-sufficiency skills.
4. Information & Referral: Essential for rural communities where physical access to services is limited.
5. Transition & Diversion Services: Assisting youth transitions, moving individuals out of institutional settings, and providing diversion resources to help people remain in their homes.

- **Specialized & Sub-Grant Programs:**

- Veteran Directed Care Services: Supporting veterans in self-directing their personal care and living needs.
- ADA Technical Assistance: Offering training and accessibility consulting.
- BluePath Directory (blue-path.org): A collaborative online database and marketing tool connecting consumers with local businesses that meet ADA accessibility standards.

- **Urban vs. Rural Divide:** Operating across both Spokane/Spokane Valley and five surrounding rural counties requires unique flexibility to ensure equal access to core services regardless of geography.

- **Cultural Adaptability:** Tailoring independent living support to fit both high-density city environments and tight-knit, isolated rural communities.
- **5-Year Milestone:** Reaching five years of successful service delivery under this expanded multi-county framework demonstrates strong resilience, creative outreach, and sustainable growth for your team.

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

Infrastructure & Operations

- **Dual Physical Offices:** Both the Ellensburg and Yakima office locations are fully staffed and operational, eliminating cross-county staff travel and significantly lowering travel expenses and commuting time.
- **Staff Growth:** Reached a historic high of 13 total staff members (expanding from 5 staff over the last 5 years), supported directly by NSI funding.
- **Fiscal Year End:** Currently conducting file audits to verify SMART goals and reporting compliance ahead of fiscal year-end closeout.

Youth & Family Programming

- **Youth Activities:** Expanded age-bracketed programming across Yakima and Grant counties, covering K–5th grade, middle school (6th–8th), and high school (9th–12th) led by Yakima staff, along with 18+ programs.
- **Young Kids & Assistive Toy Lending (Ages 2–5):** Established an assistive toy loan library in Yakima designed for families navigating

early childhood or parental loss, laying the ground for future parent support groups.

- **Youth Transition Delivery Model:** Transitioning from a single Youth Transition Coordinator (following Devin's departure) to cross-training all 5 Independent Living Specialists to cover the 14–24 age range network-wide.

Systemic Advocacy & Transit Assessment

- **Yakima Bus Accessibility Audit:** Advocate Oscar led staff in riding all bus routes in Yakima to evaluate driver safety, stop announcements, and physical accessibility. Findings will be presented to city officials as formal transit feedback, with a similar assessment planned for Ellensburg in the future.

Equipment, Veteran & Regional Reach

- **Resource Loans & AT:** Operating an Assistive Technology loan program and resource library directly out of the Yakima office.
- **Veteran Outreach:** Scaling regional veteran services, with Yakima staff taking on 3–4 southern counties and Ellensburg staff managing Lincoln and Ferry counties.

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

Outreach & Impact Highlights

- **Outreach Volume:** Reached **826.25 community outreach hours** for the current fiscal year so far, with peak activity occurring during July and August due to summer community fairs and forums.

- **Key Programs & Collaborations:** Partnering with Hopelink on community navigation, hosting community forums, participating in Days for Autism, and facilitating multiple peer support groups across King County (virtual, older adults in North King County, and regional groups for Eastside and Westside offices in Seattle, Redmond, and Auburn).
- **Disability Pride Month Recognition (July):**
 - Represented at the King County Disability Pride flag raising at the County Administration Building.
 - Attended the Seattle City Council meeting to accept the official Disability Pride Month proclamation.

Programs & Outings

- **EPIC Program:** Stands for **Empowering People In the Community**. It serves as DEC's out-and-about social exploration group meeting every two months.
 - *Recent outings:* Museum of Flight (Boeing Air Museum) and the Seattle Aquarium.

Staffing & Operations

- **AmeriCorps Support:** Wrapping up term projects focused on the King County Disability Consortium (KCDC) and disability emergency preparedness training. Term end dates are at the end of August; renewal applications for both positions are currently underway.
- **Region 10 Conference:** Secured grant funding to take all **9 staff members** to the Region 10 (WA, OR, ID, AK) Regional Independent Living Conference in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, at the end of August.

- **Strategic Planning:** Ongoing work focused on strategic planning and organizational sustainability.

2027 Quarterly meeting schedule

January	April	July	October
Dates: 21 st Location: Virtual	Dates: 15 th Location: Virtual	Dates: 8 th Location: Virtual	Dates: 21 st Location: Virtual

Adjourn 3:30 pm