

**STATE PLAN FOR
INDEPENDENT LIVING
(SPIL)**

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended, Chapter 1, Title VII

PART B - INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

Part C - Centers for Independent Living

State: Montana

FISCAL YEARS:

Effective Date: October 1, 2024- September 30, 2027

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number (OMB 0985-0044). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 240 hours per response, including time for gathering and maintaining the data needed and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to receive financial assistance (Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended).

Executive Summary

The Montana Statewide Plan for Independent Living was collaboratively developed with members of the Montana Statewide Independent Living Council, the Centers for Independent Living, and the Disability Employment and Transitions Division within the Montana Department of Health and Human Services. This document provides those involved a framework to provide services, to promote opportunities, and to better integrate independent living services in Montana.

The mission of the Montana Independent Living community is focused on making independent living a reality in the community of their choice for Montanans with disabilities. Thus, the SPIL focuses on three main goals to facilitate independent living:

1. Promote awareness of Independent Living services for those with disabilities across Montana.
2. Provide factual evidence to stake holders, community members, and state and local legislatures to provide best practices that advocate for systemic change in the Independent Living community.
3. Develop community access for Montanans with disabilities.

Additionally, center to many recent and on-going discussions within the Independent Living community in Montana is House Bill 922, or the Olmstead Plan for Montana. This bill was signed into law on May 18, 2023, and has been a pivotal force in how and why the SPIL goals have been written. Presently, the bill focuses on the implementation of the Olmstead Plan within the State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. A major goal of all involved in the new state plan is expanding the Olmstead Plan to all applicable State Divisions within Montana.

This document's mission and goals support a 3-year plan for Independent Living. Each goal with its associated objectives outlines which entity will complete step within the objective, the timeline for completion, and measurable indicators of successful completion. The table format allows those using this document as a guide to visualize vertically the steps to completion and the entities completing each part.

This document also describes the vast size and diversity within the State of Montana. Montana is comprised of eight Native American reservations.

Approximately 8% of the population of Montana is Native Americans. Thus, outreach and partnerships with the Native American tribes and Indian Health is critical in meeting the Independent Living needs of this population. Additionally, creative solutions to distance and remoteness also continue to challenge the Independent Living Centers across the state. Satellite offices, mobile offices, and ZOOM meetings are integral in supporting Montanans with disabilities across the state.

Also crucial to this document are the funding sources and the process of awarding these funds to the four CILs within the state. Annually, Part C funds, Part B funds, and the General Funds amounts are totaled and equalized. In Montana each of the four CILs receiving being funded at the same amount. With the diversity, distance, and differences within each region of the state, each CIL strives to best serve those with disabilities within the Big Sky region.

Section 1: Goals, Objectives, and Activities

1.1 Mission:

Mission of the Independent Living Network and the SPIL.

Mission: Montana Statewide Independent Living Program

To make independent living a reality for Montanans with disabilities by promoting and practicing a philosophy of consumer control, development of peer relationships and peer role models, self-determination, self-help, equal access, and advocacy to maximize independence, integration, and full inclusion of people with disabilities into mainstream Montana.

The Montana Statewide Independent Living Council (MTSILC), Centers for Independent Living (CIL), and Disability Employment and Transitions (DET) work together to accomplish this mission. These organizations address a variety of issues impacting Montanans with all types of disabilities.

1.2 Goals:

Goals of the IL Network for the three-year period of the plan.

1.3 Objectives

Objectives for the three-year period of the plan – including geographic scope,

desired outcomes, target dates, and indicators. Including compatibility with the purpose of Title VII, Chapter 1.

1.4 Evaluation

Methods and processes the SILC will use to evaluate the effectiveness of the SPIL including timelines and evaluation of satisfaction of individuals with disabilities.

***Sections 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 are all included in attached spreadsheet below:

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Goal 1: Promote Awareness of Independent Living Services for those with disabilities across Montana:

<i>Objective 1: Conduct meaningful outreach to current consumers</i>
<i>Objective 2: Conduct meaningful outreach/public relations to perspective consumers, caregivers, and stakeholders.</i>

<i>Objective 1</i>	<i>Conduct meaningful outreach to current consumers</i>		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec. 2024</u> (SILC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the specific items needed to be measured. ○ Identify specific parameters of the survey. • <u>Q2: end Mar. 2025</u> (SILC, DSE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine a method (including cost analysis) of conducting survey that generates sufficient data to measure CIL satisfaction • <u>Q3: end June 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a satisfaction survey • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initial survey distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec. 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Distribute/collection initial survey • <u>Q2: end Mar. 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collect and examine results • <u>Q3: end June 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Modify survey • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Redistribute updated survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec. 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collect surveys ○ Merge two-years of collected data • <u>Q2: end Mar. 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analyze data, distribute data to CILs • <u>Q3: end June 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create plan for long-term distribution and use of survey • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finalized plan for long-term distribution & use of survey
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify clients</i> • <i>Survey distributed</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Measure satisfaction/strengths/needs</i> • <i>redistribute updated survey</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Collect useful data that CILs, ultimately identify strengths and areas of focus for the SILC and CILs, implementing change</i>

<i>Objective 2</i>	<i>Conduct meaningful outreach/public relations to perspective consumers, caregivers, and stakeholders.</i>		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec. 2024</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine Outreach priorities • <u>Q2: end Mar. 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review methods • <u>Q3: end June 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review methods ○ Cost analysis/identify free sources of outreach • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work on identifying methodology to be used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec. 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation plan • <u>Q2: end Mar. 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintenance to existing plan • <u>Q3: end June 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintenance to existing plan • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct reassessment of plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec. 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assess and modification of plan • <u>Q2: end Mar. 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation identified updates • <u>Q3: end June 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement new plan • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Final Assessment
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify methodology to be used</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increase SILC/CIL Board membership</i> • <i>Increase SILC/CIL volunteers</i> • <i>Develop and provide leadership opportunities with SILC membership</i> • <i>Increase partnership & collaboration with stakeholders</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increase SILC/CIL Board membership</i> • <i>Increase SILC/CIL volunteers</i> • <i>Develop and provide leadership opportunities</i> • <i>Increase partnership & collaboration with stakeholders</i>

Goal 2: Provide factual evidence to stake holders, community members, and state and local legislatures to provide best practices that advocate for systemic change in the Independent Living community.

<i>Objective 1: educate ourselves, form our position, and express our position to stakeholders & policy makers using white papers to advocate for systemic change (topics potentially including: employment first, coordinated transportation)</i>			
<i>Objective 2: Determine, write, and distribute White Paper(s) focused on topics important to Montanans living with disabilities to create systems change and the implementation of effective practices and policies.</i>			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec. 2024</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Soliciting inputs • <u>Q2: end March 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topics identified & set ○ Committee set & Chair named • <u>Q3: end June 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research & education ○ Experts identified and consulted • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wrap-up research and supporting information for writing white paper(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec. 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outline of research of research • <u>Q2: end March 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Produce abstract • <u>Q3: end June 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop drafts • <u>Q4: end Sept 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Final draft for submission by SILC and CILs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec. 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Solicit input on final draft from stake holders, community members • <u>Q2: end March 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue solicitation on final draft ○ Finalize position • <u>Q3: end June 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Distribute to community stake holders, state government, state and local elected officials • <u>Q4: end Sept 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Distribute to community stake holders, state gov., state and local elected officials
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify topic(s) to be researched</i> • <i>Complete research</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Draft white paper(s)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paper distributed to establish public opinion</i>

Goal 3: Develop integrated community access for Montanans with disabilities.

<i>Objective 1: SILC will support through its Olmstead Committee education and awareness it will support a unified state plan.</i>			
<i>Objective 2: Create access to the disability community as contributing participants in development of policy and practice.</i>			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Pre-Q1: Sept.2024</u> (SILC, CILs, Rural Institute, State Government Departments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ hold IL symposium (discuss with admin. of other depts. w/in state) • <u>Q1: end Dec 2024</u> (SILC, CILs, Rural Institute, State Government Departments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify and invite to SILC meeting (in hour slots) partner w/ Department administrators & provide education- advocate, not lobby • <u>Q2: end March 2025</u> (SILC,CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocating for the inclusion of all Departments in Olmstead amendment • <u>Q3: end June 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocating for the inclusion of all Departments in Olmstead amendment • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec 2025</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SILC establish on-going Olmstead committee for consulting role • <u>Q2: end March 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going consulting and representation on the work groups (through task force involvement) • <u>Q3: end June 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going consulting and representation on the work groups (through task force involvement) ○ Develop summary for IL Symposium presentation • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hold Symposium and task forces will be integrated in to work groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Q1: end Dec 2026</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going consulting, representation, and maintenance on the work groups (through task force involvement) • <u>Q2: end March 2027</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going consulting, representation, and maintenance on the work groups (through task force involvement) ○ Legislative education • <u>Q3: end June 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going consulting, representation, and maintenance on the work groups (through task force involvement) ○ Legislative education • <u>Q4: end Sept. 2027</u> (SILC, CILs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going consulting, representation, and maintenance on the work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocating for the inclusion of all Departments in Olmstead amendment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> groups (through task force involvement) ○ Legislative education
<i>Outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>HB922 (Olmstead Plan) amended to include all State Departments (not solely DPHHS) -statute or executive order</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increasing opportunities for peer development with attendance at IL Symposium</i> • <i>Peer mentors engaging in leadership roles in task forces</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Refined and finished Unified state plan in Montana</i>

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1.5 Financial Plan

Sources, uses of, and efforts to coordinate funding to be used to accomplish the Goals and Objectives. Process for grants/contracts, selection of grantees, and distribution of funds to facilitate effective operations and provision of services.

Fiscal Year(s): 2025					
Sources	Projected Funding Amounts and Uses				
	SILC Resource Plan	IL Services	General CIL Operations	Other SPIL Activities	Retained by DSE for Administrative costs (applies only to Part B funding)
Title VII Funds					
Chapter 1, Part B	\$21,823.00	\$311,016.60	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,817.00
Chapter 1, Part C	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,094,997.00	\$0.00	
Other Federal Funds					
Sec. 101(a)(18) of the Act (Innovation and Expansion shall not be \$0)	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Social Security Reimbursement	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Non-Federal Funds Part B State Match					
Other State Match for Funds in SPIL	\$0.00	\$34,557.40	\$0.00	\$0.00	
State Funds	\$0.00	\$474,948.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Other					
	\$21,823.00	\$820,331.40	\$1,094,997.00		

Fiscal Year(s): 2026					
Sources	Projected Funding Amounts and Uses				
	SILC Resource Plan	IL Services	General CIL Operations	Other SPIL Activities	Retained by DSE for Administrative costs (applies only to Part B funding)
Title VII Funds					
Chapter 1, Part B	\$21,823.00	\$311,016.60	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,817.00
Chapter 1, Part C	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,094,997.00	\$0.00	
Other Federal Funds					
Sec. 101(a)(18) of the Act (Innovation and Expansion shall not be \$0)	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Social Security Reimbursement	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Non-Federal Funds Part B State Match					
Other State Match for Funds in SPIL	\$0.00	\$34,557.40	\$0.00	\$0.00	
State Funds	\$0.00	\$474,948.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Other					
	\$21,823.00	\$820,331.40	\$1,094,997.00		

Fiscal Year(s): 2027					
Sources	Projected Funding Amounts and Uses				
	SILC Resource Plan	IL Services	General CIL Operations	Other SPIL Activities	Retained by DSE for Administrative costs (applies only to Part B funding)
Title VII Funds					
Chapter 1, Part B	\$21,823.00	\$311,016.60	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,817.00
Chapter 1, Part C	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,094,997.00	\$0.00	
Other Federal Funds					
Sec. 101(a)(18) of the Act (Innovation and Expansion shall not be \$0)	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Social Security Reimbursement	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Non-Federal Funds Part B State Match					
Other State Match for Funds in SPIL	\$0.00	\$34,557.40	\$0.00	\$0.00	
State Funds	\$0.00	\$474,948.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Other					
	\$21,823.00	\$820,331.40	\$1,094,997.00		

Narrative Section

Description of financial plan narrative.

The goals incorporated into this SPIL are supported through the contracts for services with the CILs from Part B, including the state match, listed under IL services; the CIL contracts for services from

the state general fund listed under IL services; Part C funds listed under General CIL Operations. During allocation of state funding, issues such as the imbalance of federal funding are taken into consideration in order to equalize the funding among the centers to maintain equal accessibility of IL services throughout the state of Montana.

Part C funds, which are distributed directly to the CILs, are the primary funding source for supporting the operation of CILs and CILs goals. Part C funds are directly granted by ACL to all four Montana Centers for Independent Living. The state unit does not have the required funds to participate in the matching mechanism detailed in the statute; therefore, Part C grants are made directly to the CILs. Summit and MILP receive the majority of the Part C funds available to the state of Montana.

The following estimated projections are made for the Centers for Part B, Part C and State IL General Funds, actual distribution may vary as described previously in this plan to achieve the goal of equalization. (Section 1.5 Financial Plan)

Throughout the 3 years of this SPIL, each year of the SPIL the allocated independent living state general funds will be provided through a contract by the DSE, DETD, as follows:

- \$195,916.01 for LIFTT,
- \$82,530.61 for MILP,
- \$185,230.36 for NCILS, and
- \$11,271.02 for Summit.

These funds will be used for the core IL services and to provide services for identified underserved populations including Native Americans with disabilities, youth with disabilities, veterans with disabilities, and persons with disabilities living in rural/remote areas.

In addition, for each year of the SPIL, the Montana SILC and DSE (DETD) have designated Part B funds that will be provided through a contract by the DSE, (DETD) as follows:

- \$152,928.00 for LIFTT,
- \$35,531.00 for MILP,
- \$148,694.68 for NCILS, and
- \$8,419.00 for Summit.

These Part B contract totals include the federal award portion and the state of Montana 10% match as required by the Notice of Award statement.

Finally, the SILC, CILs and DSE recognize the importance of providing IL services to people with disabilities throughout the state. Therefore, the Part C funds will be used to address these services.

Part C is allocated by the federal government, and these funds are sent directly to each center. The total Part C amounts are as follows:

- \$130,035.00 for LIFTT,
- \$360,818.00 for MILP,
- \$144,955.00 for NCILS, and
- \$459,189.00 for Summit.

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Section 2: Scope, Extent, and Arrangements of Services

2.1 Services

Services to be provided to persons with disabilities that promote full access to community life including geographic scope, determination of eligibility, and statewide reach.

Table 2.1A: Independent living services	Provided using Part B (check to indicate yes)	Provided using other funds (check to indicate yes; do not list the other funds)	Entity that provides (specify CIL, DSE, or the other entity)
Core Independent Living Services, as follows:			
- Information and referral	X	X	CIL
- Individual and systems advocacy	X	X	CIL
- Peer counseling	X	X	CIL
- IL skills training	X	X	CIL
- Transition services including:			
▪ Transition from nursing homes & other institutions	X	X	CIL
▪ Diversion from institutions	X	X	CIL
▪ Transition of youth (who were eligible for an IEP) to post-secondary life	X	X	CIL
Counseling services, including psychological, psychotherapeutic, and related services	X	X	CIL

Table 2.1A: Independent living services	Provided using Part B (check to indicate yes)	Provided using other funds (check to indicate yes; do not list the other funds)	Entity that provides (specify CIL, DSE, or the other entity)
<p>Services related to securing housing or shelter, including services related to community group living, and supportive of the purposes of this Act and of the titles of this Act, and adaptive housing services (including appropriate accommodations to and modifications of any space used to serve, or occupied by, individuals with disabilities)</p> <p>Note: CILs are not allowed to own or operate housing.</p>	X	X	CIL
Rehabilitation technology	X	X	CIL,DSE
Mobility training	X	X	CIL,DSE
<p>Services and training for individuals with cognitive and sensory disabilities, including life skills training, and interpreter and reader services</p>	X	X	CIL,DSE
<p>Personal assistance services, including attendant care and the training of personnel providing such services</p>		X	CIL,DSE
<p>Surveys, directories, and other activities to identify appropriate housing, recreation opportunities, and accessible transportation, and other support services</p>	X	X	CIL,DSE
<p>Consumer information programs on rehabilitation and IL services available under this Act, especially for minorities and other individuals with disabilities who have traditionally been unserved or underserved by programs under this Act</p>	X	X	CIL,DSE

Table 2.1A: Independent living services	Provided using Part B (check to indicate yes)	Provided using other funds (check to indicate yes; do not list the other funds)	Entity that provides (specify CIL, DSE, or the other entity)
Education and training necessary for living in the community and participating in community activities	X	X	CIL
Supported living		X	CIL,DSE
Transportation, including referral and assistance for such transportation	X	X	CIL,DSE
Physical rehabilitation		X	CIL
Therapeutic treatment	X	X	CIL,DSE
Provision of needed prostheses and other appliances and devices	X	X	CIL
Individual and group social and recreational services	X	X	CIL
Training to develop skills specifically designed for youths who are individuals with significant disabilities to promote self-awareness and esteem, develop advocacy and self-empowerment skills, and explore career options	X	X	CIL
Services for children	X	X	CIL,DSE
Services under other Federal, State, or local programs designed to provide resources, training, counseling, or other assistance, of substantial benefit in enhancing the independence, productivity, and quality of life of individuals with disabilities	X	X	CIL,DSE
Appropriate preventive services to decrease the need of individuals with significant disabilities for similar services in the future	X	X	CIL,DSE
Community awareness programs to enhance the understanding and integration into society of individuals with disabilities	X	X	CIL,DSE

Table 2.1A: Independent living services	Provided using Part B (check to indicate yes)	Provided using other funds (check to indicate yes; do not list the other funds)	Entity that provides (specify CIL, DSE, or the other entity)
Such other services as may be necessary and not inconsistent with the Act	X	X	CIL,DSE

2.2 Outreach to Unserved and Underserved Populations

Identify steps to be taken regarding statewide outreach to populations that are unserved or underserved by programs that are funded under Title VII, including minority groups and urban and rural populations and how outreach will be conducted to address equity.

The Montana Centers for Independent Living work diligently to meet the needs of people with disabilities within the state. Every county is served by a CIL with a focus of meeting the needs of the unserved and underserved Montanans. In Montana the unserved and underserved are defined by (but not limited to) Native Americans with disabilities, those living in the rural and frontier regions of the state with disabilities, Veterans with disabilities, youth with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community with disabilities, and individuals with mental illnesses.

Targeted populations reside in all areas of the state. The four CILs provide services in each of Montana's 56 counties, seven federally recognized Native American reservations, and one state federally recognized Native American community. With the implementation of WIOA, youth have become a focus point for the DSE, SILC, and CILs. The DSE is contracting with schools and MT CILs to provide pre-employment transition services. Statewide conferences such as The Montana Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF) and the Montana Youth Transitions project are specifically designed to help youth develop the skills needed to succeed in life after high school. The individual CILs are also actively reaching out to youth through various programs such as Building Advocacy and Learning Leadership Skills (BALLS), Youth Opening Doors through Advocacy (YODA), Youth in Motion, and many others.

Additionally, Montana has twelve federally recognized tribes dispersed throughout the state. Native American populations in Montana have been identified as being underserved. Second to individuals with disabilities, Native Americans are the

largest minority group in the state. Native Americans compose 6.5% percent of Montana's population with 60% of the population living on one of the seven federally recognized reservations. Each of the CILs and the DSE work with Indian Health Services to develop an interconnected network that addresses the IL issues for Native American's that do not reside on the reservation. The IL Network continues to focus on several priorities to address the needs expressed by Native Americans with disabilities.

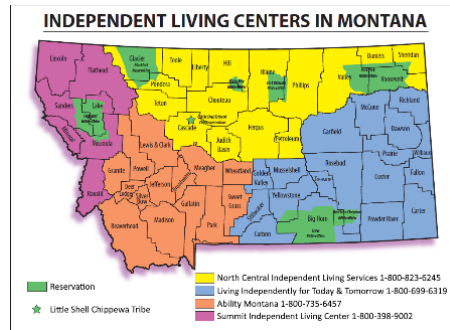
- Summit Independent Living has one reservation in its service area.
- Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) has two reservations in its service area.
- North Central Independent Living Services (NCILS) has five reservations in its service area.

Montana is a large and mostly rural state with areas of the state being designated as frontier given the low population density. Montana is the third least densely populated state in the United States. Forty-six of the fifty-six counties (82%) are considered frontier and average only 6.86 individuals per square mile of land. Those living in the rural areas furthest away from the larger cities are often underserved as well. The CILs have both branch offices and mobile offices to help ease the difficulty people with disabilities have in obtaining services and addressing issues in their communities and homes.

- NCILS has offices in Great Falls, Conrad, and Glasgow.
- Ability Montana has offices in Helena, Butte, and Bozeman.
- Summit has offices in Missoula, Polson, Hamilton, and Kalispell, as well as a separate office in Missoula for youth programs.
- LIFTT has offices in Billings and Glendive.

In addition, LIFTT and NCILS have teamed together to serve the “big open” in the east central part of the state with its population average of only 4 people per square mile.

LIFTT and NCILS have developed “mobile offices” that travel to the remote areas of the state 1 day/week to provide much needed information and services. Space is generously shared with LIFTT and NCILS, thus providing expanded service area, distribution of information, and increased connection to Independent Living specialists.



Veterans with disabilities have also been identified as an underserved population in Montana. Montana has one of the largest per capita veteran populations in the United States. It is estimated that nearly 1 in 11 (8.9%) Montana residents are Veterans. Data indicates 30.50% of Montana veterans have a disability. Of the nearly 90,000 Veterans living in Montana, roughly 22,000 receive Veterans Disability Compensation according to the VA (2017 numbers).

SILC and the CILs conduct outreach and networking activities to promote the availability of IL services to Veterans with disabilities. Ability Montana has developed a Veterans' Directed Care program, managed by a retired veteran. Additionally, various CILs have also collaborated with Joining Community Forces (JCF), the Montana Veterans Affairs office, the VA hospitals, the VA nursing homes. Likewise, LIFFT has partnered with the local court system to suspend sentences until after sobriety is obtained. Continued outreach is also conducted by participating in events such as the Veterans Resource Fair and the yearly Memorial Run. Classes through the VA at Fort Harrison are offered and recreational outreach therapy programs such as sled hockey and "summer camp" fishing and rafting excursions were sponsored and designed specifically for the Veteran population. Several of the Montana CILs are also listed as Military Strong Agencies.

Coordination

Plans for coordination of services and cooperation among programs and organizations that support community life for persons with disabilities.

SILC members are provided with information about the CILs during their orientation. Each CIL also provides an update of their activities during the quarterly SILC meetings. In addition, SILC members are encouraged to periodically visit the CIL nearest to their home. CIL directors are invited to all general SILC meetings

and serve on various committees and task forces alongside SILC members and others in the community.

The SILC IL program manager serves as the liaison between the CILs, the SILC, and the DSE.

The SILC IL program manager does a site visit to each CIL at least every other year. The program manager also attends board and other meetings at the CILs when invited to do so. Along with staff from the CILs and SILC members, the program manager participates in the various task forces and committees and aids in the planning of IL events such as Legislative Day, Rally Day, IL Symposium, and other statewide activities. The SILC program manager, with SILC input, prepares the contracts between the CILs and the DSE to distribute Part B and Montana General Fund monies.

The SILC has representation on the Montana Rehabilitation Council. This provides an avenue of mutual support for Vocational Rehabilitation and IL programs and issues. The Administrator of the DSE assists with the coordination of these various activities.

In order to expand access to the host of services that may be provided by each CIL and requested by consumers, the SILC encourages the Montana network of CILs to work together to render services, even across service area boundaries, in the most effective manner through contracts, MOU agreements, or other terms of agreement between the various CILs.

The CILs and local school districts work with MT DPHHS administering the Pre-ETS programs. Thus, an expanded number of Montana students receive exposure to job explorations, work-based learning experiences, counseling on post-secondary options, work-place readiness, and skills in self-advocacy.

Additionally, the four CILs across the state are teaming up the Money Follows the Person to locally administer this program with the goal of helping individuals better access to home and community-based services.

Section 3: Network of Centers

3.1 Existing Centers

Current Centers for Independent Living including: legal name; geographic area and counties served; and source(s) of funding. Oversight process, by source of funds and oversight entity.

Montana is a vast state covering approximately 147,000 square miles, divided into 56 counties. Montana is the 4th largest state in the Nation and to drive east to west across the state you would travel 630 miles. Two-fifth's of the state is considered mountainous and three-fifth are part of the Great Plains.

Presently, there are twelve tribes, Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Chippewa, Cree, Crow, Gros Ventre, Kootenai, Little Shell Chippewa, Northern Cheyenne, Pend d'Oreille, Salish and Sioux. There are also seven federally recognized American Indian Reservations. The Little Shell Chippewa Indians received recognition in 2019 and presently working to establish tribal lands.

There are four primary Centers of Independent Living offices, eight branch offices, and several mobile offices that form an IL network that covers every county in the state. The CILs, including their branch offices, provide the five core IL services along with system change advocacy, education, social change, and awareness services. All four CILs receive a mix of Part B and state general fund through contract with the State of Montana. Part C funds are dispersed to the CILs directly by the federal government. The estimated distribution of state funds for Part B and general funds are included in section 1.3 Financial Plan.

Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT)

1241 Crawford Dr.
Billings, MT 59102
406-259-5181
www.LIFTT.org

Counties Served: Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, Golden Valley, McCone, Musselshell, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Treasure, and Wibaux.

SPIL Signatory: YES

Sources of funding and oversight of those funds:

- Part C / Administration for Community Living's oversight process
- Part B / DSE oversight process – see section 4.5 Oversight of Part B funds
- State General Funds / DSE – State of Montana oversight process

LIFTT provides services in 18 counties of vastly varied population size in southeastern Montana. Much of LIFTT's service area includes very rural and sparsely populated areas but also includes highly populated communities such as Billings in Yellowstone County. The service area also includes two Native American Reservations spread across several counties. Those reservations include the Northern Cheyenne and Crow tribes. Currently LIFTT operates two main offices in Billings and Glendive.

LIFTT provides outreach from the Glendive office in using the mobile office model to the remaining service areas. Additional office space is generously provided by different organizations such as the MT Job Service.

Summit Independent Living (SUMMIT)

700 SW Higgins Ave, Suite 101

406-728-1630

www.summitilc.org [summitilc.org]

Counties Served: Missoula, Ravalli, Mineral, Lake, Sanders, Flathead, and Lincoln.

SPIL Signatory: YES

Sources of funding and oversight of those funds:

- Part C / Administration for Community Living's oversight process
- Part B / DSE oversight process – see section 443 Oversight of Part B funds
- State General Funds / DSE – State of Montana oversight process

SUMMIT's services are available to residents of Missoula, Ravalli, Mineral, Lake, Sanders, Flathead and Lincoln Counties in western Montana. Missoula and Kalispell are the primary urban areas in this region, while most of the remaining service area is characterized by small towns and sparsely populated rural areas.

Although Summits seven county service area is the smallest CIL region in Montana, Summits region contains nearly 1/3 of the state's population.

Summit is headquartered in Missoula with branch offices in Hamilton, Polson, and Kalispell. Summit also has a second downtown Missoula location housing BASE, a social engagement center where a variety of programs are offered aimed at enriching life through the arts as well as assisting individuals in the pursuit of education, employment, and interdependence. The Lake and Sanders County office is in

Polson, a community on the Flathead Indian Reservation, the tribal home of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The Hamilton office is responsible for services in Ravalli County, the main office in Missoula primarily serves Missoula and Mineral Counties, and the Kalispell office serves Flathead and Lincoln Counties. Staff members from the Missoula office also travel to outlying counties to serve consumers in the Self-Directed Community First Choice/Personal Assistance Services program, as well as to assist with delivery of other independent living services and Summit activities as appropriate. Summit also provides Pre-ETS and other youth services at various schools throughout its service area.

North Central Independent Living Services (NCILS)

1120 25th Avenue NE Black Eagle, MT 59414

406-452-9834

www.ncils.org

Counties Served: Blaine, Cascade, Choteau, Daniels, Fergus, Glacier, Hill, Judith, Basin, Liberty, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Teton, Toole, and Valley.

SPIL Signatory: YES

Sources of funding and oversight of those funds:

- Part C / Administration for Community Living's oversight process
- Part B / DSE oversight process – see section 4.5 Oversight of Part B funds
- State General Funds / DSE – State of Montana oversight process

NCILS conducts activities to increase the number of people served who are members of populations that are currently underserved, which includes any consumer living within the seventeen-county service area. NCILS provides IL services within the following seventeen Montana counties of Blaine, Cascade, Choteau, Daniels, Fergus, Glacier, Hill, Judith Basin, Liberty, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Teton, Toole, and Valley.

NCILS service area includes four Native American Reservations, which include the Blackfeet Indian Reservation within the counties of Glacier and Pondera, the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation within the counties of Blaine and Phillips, the Fort Peck Indian Reservation within the counties of Roosevelt, Valley, and Daniels, and the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation within the counties of Hill and Choteau. The

federally recognized Little Shell Band of the Chippewa-Cree, headquartered in Great Falls, MT, is also within NCILS service area.

NCILS maintains one branch office in the town of Glasgow, which primarily serves the most eastern counties of NCILS service area and a second branch office in Conrad, which primarily provides services in Teton, Pondera, Toole, Liberty, and Glacier Counties. Staff members from NCILS also provide outreach to the underserved population of youth with disabilities through the Montana Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF) and the Montana Youth Transitions Project (MYT) office that is located in Lewis and Clark County but provides services for youth statewide.

NCILS provides long-term care ombudsman services in Hill, Liberty, Chouteau, and Cascade Counties and provides fiscal management services under the Big Sky Bonanza program statewide.

Montana Independent Living Project dba Ability Montana

825 Great Northern Blvd., Suite 105

Helena, MT 59601

406-442-5755

<https://abilitymt.org/>

Counties Served: Broadwater, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Granite, Madison, Silver Bow, Powell, Gallatin, Meagher, Park, Sweet Grass, Madison, and Wheatland.

SPIL Signatory: YES

Sources of funding and oversight of those funds:

- Part C / Administration for Community Living's oversight process
- Part B / DSE oversight process – see section 4.5 Oversight of Part B funds
- State General Funds / DSE – State of Montana oversight process

Ability Montana has three offices: Helena, Butte, and Bozeman, providing services to consumers living in fourteen SW Montana counties. The main office in Helena provides services in Broadwater, Jefferson, and Lewis and Clark Counties; the Butte branch office provides services in Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Granite, Jefferson, Madison, Silver Bow and Powell Counties; and the Bozeman branch

office provides services in Gallatin, Meagher, Park, Sweet Grass, Madison and Wheatland Counties.

All offices of Ability Montana provide full services to customers accessing services.

3.2 Expansion and Adjustment of Network

Plan and priorities for use of funds, by funding source, including Part B funds, Part C funds, State funds, and other funds, whether current, increased, or one-time funding, and methodology for distribution of funds, and use of funds to build capacity of existing Centers, establish new Centers, and/or increase statewide reach of Network.

For the period of the October 1, 2024 thru September 30, 2027 SPIL the SILC and the CIL network have NO priority for the establishment of new CIL(s).

The plan for further expansion of the network of Montana Centers for Independent Living (CILs) is to build additional satellite offices and utilize mobile offices rather than developing a new Center for Independent Living. All 56 Montana counties are included within the service area of the four existing centers. All counties are served, with the mission of each CIL to best meet the needs of the underserved. Each of Montana's four CILs will determine the best course of action to address unmet and underserved needs within its service area. Options they will consider could include establishing new satellite offices, mobile offices, or enhancing/expanding the capacity of existing offices. This SPIL does not designate specific geographic regions of the state as underserved but rather, focuses on underserved populations: youth with disabilities, veterans with disabilities, American Indians with disabilities, and individuals living in rural and frontier areas of the state.

Any additional funding would provide for expansion of services within the existing CILs. Those funds would be passed through to the four existing CILs and shared equally per the established equalization plan. This SPIL does not reflect a plan to establish a new CIL, but rather to build on the existing branch office strategy for further expansion of the IL network in Montana.

Minimum funding level for a Center and formula/plan for distribution of funds to bring each Center to the minimum. Exceptions must be explained with sufficient detail.

Equalization of funding for Montana CILs is the practice of ensuring that the combined budgets of each center are the same. Equalization of funding for CILs considers the combined monies from Part B, Part C, and General Fund sources. When funding levels of Part C and/or Part B would change (increase or decrease) the change would be distributed equally between the four existing CILs. Funding from grants and other contracts are not included in the equalization calculations.

When additional Part C, Part B, or Montana General Funds become available through cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), provider rate increases or other appropriations, all four centers will receive adjustments in the amounts necessary to ensure that their combined overall budgets, consisting of funds from Part B, Part C, and the Montana General Fund, remain equal.

For example, if one center receives a relatively larger Part C cost of living adjustment (COLA), that center's General Fund or Part B funding will be adjusted so that the total funding for each center remains equal. When a decrease in funding occurs, the decrease will be applied so that the total funding for each center remains equal. In some cases, a decrease in one funding source may result in an adjustment to a different funding source. However, the total combined funding from Part B, Part C, and the Montana General Fund for each center shall always remain equal. The minimum funding level for developing a new CIL in Montana would be \$750,000, inclusive of Part C, Part B, and Montana General Fund dollars. This amount takes into consideration Montana's sparsely populated geographic area and necessary travel costs, the rapid growth in its real estate costs, and necessary start-up expenses for any new business organization. Currently, all four (4) Montana CILs receive \$441,552 each.

The SILC and the CIL network continue to advocate for increased funding at both the federal and state levels. The CIL network continues to engage in resource development to meet the shortfall.

Action/process for distribution of funds relinquished or removed from a Center and/or if a Center closes.

If funds are relinquished or removed from a Center, or if a Center closes, the State Plan partners will determine the best strategy to continue providing services in the service area that was previously served by the former CIL. An assessment will be made to determine whether one or more of the remaining MT CILs could expand services into the vacated service area, or whether Request for Proposal (RFP) for the establishment of a new CIL located in the former CIL service area should take

place. For the purposes of this 2024-2027 SPIL, the Request for Proposal process would be used only if a majority of the existing CILs agree that the establishment of a new CIL in the previously vacated service area was necessary.

Plan/formula for adjusting distribution of funds when cut/reduced.

If funds are cut or reduced the reduction will be done in such a way that each Center continues funding based on the equalization formula, with the result that each Center continues to receive an equal overall amount of core funding of Part C, Part B and General Fund dollars combined.

Plan for changes to Center service areas and/or funding levels to accommodate expansion and/or adjustment of the Network.

All 56 counties in Montana are currently served by Montana's existing four Centers for Independent Living. This SPIL does not reflect planned changes in the existing service areas of each CIL. The network of Centers works closely together to ensure statewide coverage of services. Any expansion or adjustment to the network would only increase the level of service which is already being provided by the Centers. As described above, additional funding will be utilized to expand service levels through the branch office/mobile office strategy versus establishment of a new CIL.

Plan for one-time funding and/or temporary changes to Center service areas and/or funding levels.

Unless otherwise directed by the funding source, one-time funding or temporary changes in funding levels will continue to be distributed per the existing equalization formula. If, as in the case of the CARES Act funding distributed to CILs by the ACL, there is specific guidance as to how such additional funding is to be spent, those funds will be distributed directly to the CILs to accomplish the purpose of said funding as directed by the funding source.

Section 4: Designated State Entity

Disability Employment and Transitions Division, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services will serve as the entity in Montana designated to receive, administer, and account for funds made available to the state under Title VII, Chapter 1, Part B of the Act on behalf of the State. (*Sec. 704(c)*)

4.1 DSE Responsibilities

- (1) receive, account for, and disburse funds received by the State under this chapter based on the plan;
- (2) provide administrative support services for a program under Part B, and a program under Part C in a case in which the program is administered by the State under section 723;
- (3) keep such records and afford such access to such records as the Administrator finds to be necessary with respect to the programs;
- (4) submit such additional information or provide such assurances as the Administrator may require with respect to the programs; and
- (5) retain not more than 5 percent of the funds received by the State for any fiscal year under Part B. for the performance of the services outlined in paragraphs (1) through (4).

4.2 Administration and Staffing: DSE Assurances Administrative and staffing support provided by the DSE.

The SILC IL Program Manager position funding is provided by the DSE state general funds. The SILC IL program manager position is responsible for administrative staff support, coordination and hosting of SILC and related meetings, document development, and serves as the liaison between the SILC, DSE, and CILs. The program manager also provides support to SILC committees and assists with the development and management of the SPIL. The IL SILC program manager is the primary DSE staff support person, although they rely on other DSE staff members to provide support based on need and expertise.

The program manager also conducts contract compliance reviews to ensure that federal and state regulations and guidelines adhere to the Title II, Part B, state general funds, and the state match requirements.

The SILC IL program manager provides logistical support to the SILC in the development of marketing materials and strategies, promoting the SILC and SILC activities.

The SILC IL program manager develops SILC orientation materials. Additionally, the program manager forwards information regarding training opportunities and information that may be pertinent to SILC activities and interests to SILC members.

The DSE receives grant funds on behalf of the SILC and distributes them through contracts to the CILs. The program manager is responsible for developing and administering these contracts, after review and acceptance by the CIL.

The IL program manager does a site visit to each CIL at least every other year. The program manager also attends board and other meetings at the CILs when invited to do so. Along with staff from the CILs and SILC members, the program manager participates in the various task forces and committees and aids in the planning of IL events such as Legislative Day, Rally Day, IL Symposium, and other statewide activities.

Logistical support is also provided by the IL program manager in the search for additional funding for the SILC and CILs. The SILC does not currently receive any funding directly.

4.3 State- Imposed Requirements

State-imposed requirements contained in the provisions of this SPIL including:

- State law, regulation, rule, or policy relating to the DSE's administration, funding, or operation of IL programs, and/or establishment, funding, and operations of the SILC
- Rule or policy implementing any Federal law, regulation, or guideline that is beyond what would be required to comply with 45 CFR 1329
- That limits, expands, or alters requirements for the SPIL

Grant funds coming into the state must be appropriated through the legislature under the following guidelines: "MT Constitution, Article 5, Section 11, Subsections 4 and 5, which state "A general appropriation bill shall contain only appropriations for the ordinary expenses of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, for interest on the public debt, and for public schools. Every other appropriation shall be made by separate bill, containing but one subject" and that "No appropriation shall be made for religious, charitable, industrial, educational, or benevolent purposes to any private individual, private association, or private corporation not under control of the state."

Additionally, by utilizing the state accounting systems for fiscal transactions, the SILC agrees to follow state rates for lodging, mileage, and meals.

4.4 Grant Process & Distribution of Funds

Grant processes, policies, and procedures to be followed by the DSE in the awarding of grants of Part B funds.

Montana Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Disability Employment and Transition acts as the pass-through agency to distribute the Part B grant funds. This grant money includes the 10% state match and excludes the 5% Part B money held by the DSE for administration. Grant Funds are contracted with each CIL using the agreed upon equalization of process described in the financial plan (Section 1.5).

All existing and any new Part B money received by the State will continue to follow the current distribution plan. The equalization of funding to all four Centers that are within the previously described network of Montana Centers. The Centers for Independent Living include: Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow, Montana Independent Living Project dba Ability Montana, North Central Independent Living Services, Inc., and Summit Independent Living.

4.5 Oversight Process for Part B Funds

The oversight process to be followed by the DSE

Under the provisions of their contracts, service providers are required to have accounting procedures that conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and follow Uniform Guidance (CFR 200) regulations.

The DSE provides the oversight and compliance requirements for the Part B contracts. These include submittal of invoices, quarterly reports, PPR reports, and/or site visits. Per 45 CFR 75.501, any CIL receiving over \$750,000 in federal funds is required to obtain and pay for their own Single Audit. The CIL must provide a copy of this audit within 30 days of completion to DETD. Independent auditor's reports are reviewed by DPHHS Audit Services, and if deemed appropriate DPHHS Audit Services monitors for follow up and corrective actions.

4.6 722 vs. 723 State

Check one:

- X 722 (if checked, will move to Section 5)
- 723 (if checked, will move to Section 4.7)

4.7 723 States

Order of priorities for allocating funds amounts to Centers, agreed upon by the SILC and Centers, and any differences from 45 CFR 1329.21 & 1329.22.

n/a

How state policies, practices, and procedures governing the awarding of grants to Centers and oversight of the Centers are consistent with 45 CFR 1329.5, 1329.6, & 1329.22.

n/a

Section 5: Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

5.1 Establishment of SILC

How the SILC is established and SILC autonomy is assured.

The SILC was established by Executive Order of the governor in October 1985. It was further codified under Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 53-7-103. The Statewide Independent Living Council is not established as an entity within any State agency and is independent of the Montana state agencies. The following is a brief description of the legal status and placement of the SILC:

The Statewide Independent Living Council is a free-standing body whose members are appointed by the governor. The SILC has autonomy and is self-governing. It does not have legal status independent of the DSE and receives some administrative support from the DSE.

The SILC is not required to report to any entity in state government and reports to ACL to meet federal requirements.

The SILC elects the SILC chairperson and other officers. The Executive Committee (chairman, vice-chair, and secretary) of the SILC is responsible for implementing the intentions of the SILC, which are expressed through actions taken during the regular meetings of the SILC. The Executive Committee shall have the authority of the SILC in the management of the business of the SILC between meetings of the SILC, subject to the by-laws established by the SILC.

5.2 SILC Resource plan

Resources (including necessary and sufficient funding, staff/administrative support, and in-kind), by funding source and amount, for SILC to fulfill all duties and authorities.

To ensure the capacity of the SILC to fulfill all the duties and selected authorities, the SILC requires staff and support through working committees. The council requires the assistance of one full-time staff: IL Program Manager. The Program Manager works for the SILC and takes direction of the SILC. Additionally, the Program Manager works with the various committees of the SILC to achieve SPIL goals. Amongst the various duties, the Program Manager prepares the agenda and materials with the SILC chair for the full council meetings on a quarterly basis. The Program Manager is in the Central Office of the DSE. In-kind assistance is provided to the Program Manager for technology, clerical, and other state supports.

The SILC has no directly hired staff but benefits from the efforts of the DSE program manager and other support provided through state general funds assigned to the DSE for administration expenses of Montana's IL program. While the SILC resource plan seems low, a large portion of the "other SPIL activities" budget is the program manager salary and fringe benefits. A significant amount of the program manager's time is dedicated to activities requested by the SILC such as: meeting arrangements, correspondence preparation, liaison with other agencies, membership development, boards, councils, and IL outreach activities, etc.

Additionally, the Program Manager plans and/or supports the Executive committee, Membership committee, SPIL Evaluation and Writing committee, Policy and Procedure committee, Consumer Satisfaction Survey and Town Hall meetings.

The Montana SILC utilizes the efforts of the various SILC Committees for completing of tasks. The Membership Committee is crucial to the stabilization of the SILC to stay in compliance. Other committee such as SPIL Evaluation and Writing Committee are comprised of SILC Members, CIL Directors, DSE, and other community volunteers.

The Montana SILC exercises the authority to develop Ad Hoc Committees that address specific issues that arise. These Ad Hoc committees are comprised of SILC members, CIL Staff, and people with disabilities from the public.

The Montana SILC partners with other groups and organizations to achieve the goals of the SPIL.

The budgeted amounts for years 1, 2, and 3 are reflected in the Financial Plan Tables in Sec. 1.5 above.

Sources and Amounts (from the SILC Resource Plan) - Year 1

- Title VII Funds, Chapter 1, Part B
- Non-Federal Funds, State Funds (Title VII Part B State GF match)

Sources and Amounts (from the SILC Resource Plan) - Year 2

- Title VII Funds, Chapter 1, Part B
- Non-Federal Funds, State Funds (Title VII Part B State GF match)

Sources and Amounts (from the SILC Resource Plan) - Year 3

- Title VII Funds, Chapter 1, Part B
- Non-Federal Funds, State Funds (Title VII Part B State GF match)

The following is the budget for each of the three years of the SPIL:

- Meeting Expenses- \$9,000
- Consulting- \$1,000
- Supplies-\$500
- Communications-\$823
- Travel-\$5,000
- Honorariums-\$5,000
- Other- \$500
- Total: \$21,823

During the second and third year of the SPIL, the total budget amounts will be the same as the first year.

Innovation and Expansion Act funds will provide an additional \$200/year.

The grant and general funds supporting the SILC resource plan will be handled through a separate account number within the DSE fiscal operation. While approval within the fiscal systems is provided by DSE personnel, the SILC and specifically the SILC chair or chair's designee are consulted and provide guidance on expenditures. Documentation of the SILC chair's involvement and authorization is maintained by the program manager. The SILC chair or their designee reconciles recorded expenditures with the approval of expenditures by the DSE on at least a quarterly basis. The SILC chair is responsible for the appropriate use of the funds and ensuring that expenditures are not made beyond the budget for SILC resources. Likewise, detailed budget reports are given at all quarterly meetings.

Accessing the support of the DSE fiscal services to support the SILC resource plan, the SILC accepts the state rates for mileage, meals, lodging and council member reimbursement.

All resources for the SILC resource plan come from Part B funds or state general funds. Since the state legislature only meets every two years, it is only possible to project budget allocations for two years. The state matching funds have been approved for the first year of the plan. The other funds are expected federal allocations.

Process used to develop the Resource Plan.

The resource plan was developed using funds made available through State General Fund and Federal Part B grants. It was developed early in the SILC's establishment through consultation between the SILC Members, CIL Directors and the DSE. Minor adjustments to the disbursement of the funds have been made over the years but no significant changes to the Resource Plan have taken place. Total funds (Part C and B and State General Funds) are equalized and distributed to the CILs.

Process for disbursement of funds to facilitate effective operations of SILC.

The Department of Employment and Transitions acts as the DSE for the SILC. Disbursement of funds uses the pass-through model. All but 5% of the Part B and matching 10% State grant money is distributed upon invoice submittal to the CILs. The remaining 5% is set aside for SILC business and is used to pay conference attendance, conference facilitation, travel, honorariums, outreach, and per-diem. Expenses are paid through the DSE fiscal operations at the request of the SILC Chair upon Council approval.

Justification if more than 30% of the Part B appropriation is to be used for the SILC Resource Plan.

The SILC will not be using more than 30% of its Part B appropriation in its Resource Plan.

5.3 Maintenance of SILC

How State will maintain SILC over the course of the SPIL.¹

The SILC was created under an executive order in October of 1985. The Montana code, annotated in 2023, reiterated General Vocational Rehabilitation needs to cooperate with the Federal Government to carry out the purposes of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 53-7-103).

The State Office of Boards and Appointments oversees the appointment process. Applications are sent to this office, which holds them until the SILC sends its recommendations to this office. Once these recommendations are received in the Office of Boards and Councils a list of applicants are forwarded to the Governor. The Governor generally makes appointments as needed. As soon as the approval letter is received by the SILC the new appointees are welcomed into the council and begin participating in SILC activities.

The Membership Committee makes recommendations to the SILC to fill upcoming or existing vacancies on the SILC based on a review of SILC applications that focuses on federal requirements for SILC membership.

The SILC approves a list of candidates for appointment to the SILC. The SILC approved list of candidates is forwarded to the Governor's office with a request to fill upcoming or existing vacancies on the SILC.

At all times, the Governor has open applications for all state councils and boards on the Montana website, Governor's Boards and Appointments (https://governor.mt.gov/boards_appointments/). The Governor may receive applications outside of the SILC review process through this source or other activities of his/her choosing. However, the Governor's office staff members are kept aware of the requirements for serving on the SILC and requirements related to maintaining a majority of members who have a disability who are not employed by a CIL or state agency and other membership requirements.

The Governor selects candidates to fill upcoming or existing vacancies and the Governor's office sends out appointment letters.

The SILC remains autonomous in its statutory duties and authorities. It reports these activities annually through its report to the Governor. It relies on the DSE to disburse the funds it receives through Federal Part B and State General Fund grants. The SILC has a separate line item in the DSE budget which it draws from when funds are needed for equipment, projects, and other activities within its resource plan.

The SILC does not have hired staff. The SILC utilizes DSE staff assigned to assist the SILC. The SILC is involved with the evaluation, hiring and supervision of the DSE program manager, who is the primary staff person assigned to assist the SILC. The chairperson of the SILC is consulted in developing the evaluation of the DSE program manager and will note if there are deficiencies in the program manager's performance. The current DSE supervisor of the IL program manager is appointed by/or is the Administrator of the Disability Employment and Transitions Division. This individual will often participate in SILC meetings and other SILC related activities. According to the SILC bylaws, no duties are assigned to the DSE personnel made available by the DSE or any other State agency or office that would create a conflict of interest while assisting the SILC in carrying out its duties.

Section 6: Legal Basis and Certifications

6.1 Designated State Entity (DSE)

The state entity/agency designated to receive and distribute funding, as directed by the SPIL, under Title VII, Part B of the Act is Disability Employment and Transitions Division, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Authorized representative of the DSE Chanda Hermanson, Title Division Administrator.

6.2 Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) that meets the requirements of section 705 of the Act and is authorized to perform the functions outlined in section 705(c) of the Act in the State is Montana Statewide Independent Living Council.

6.3 Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

The Centers for Independent Living (CILs) eligible to sign the SPIL, a minimum of 51% whom must sign prior to submission, are:

- Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow (LIFFT)
- Montana Independent Living Project dba Ability Montana
- North Central Independent Living Services (NCILS)
- Summit Independent Living Center (Summit)

6.4 Authorizations

6.4.a. The SILC is authorized to submit the SPIL to the Independent Living Administration, Administration for Community Living. Yes (Yes/No)

6.4.b. The SILC and CILs may legally carryout each provision of the SPIL. Yes

6.4.c. State/DSE operation and administration of the program is authorized by the SPIL. Yes

Section 7: DSE Assurances

Chanda Hermanson, acting on behalf of the DSE Disability Employment and Transitions Division, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services located at P.O. Box 4210, 111North Jackson Street, Suite 4C, Helena, MT, 59601-4168, Ph: (406) 444-2590, email: Chanda.Hermanson@mt.gov 45CFR 1329.11 assures that:

- 7.1. The DSE acknowledges its role on behalf of the State, as the fiscal intermediary to receive, account for, and disburse funds received by the State to support Independent Living Services in the state based on the plan;
- 7.2. The DSE will assure that the agency keeps appropriate records, in accordance with federal and state law, and provides access to records by the federal funding agency upon request;
- 7.3. The DSE will not retain more than 5 percent of the funds received by the State for any fiscal year under Part B for administrative expenses;¹
- 7.4. The DSE assures that the SILC is established as an autonomous entity within the state as required in 45 CFR 1329.14;
- 7.5. The DSE will not interfere with the business or operations of the SILC that include but are not limited to:
 1. Expenditure of federal funds
 2. Meeting schedules and agendas
 3. SILC board business
 4. Voting actions of the SILC board
 5. Personnel actions
 6. Allowable travel
 7. Trainings
- 7.6. The DSE will abide by SILC determination of whether the SILC wants to utilize DSE staff:

1. If the SILC informs the DSE that the SILC wants to utilize DSE staff, the DSE assures that management of such staff with regard to activities and functions performed for the SILC is the sole responsibility of the SILC in accordance with Sec. 705(e)(3) of the Act (Sec. 705(e)(3), 29 U.S.C.796d(e)(3)).
- 7.7. The DSE will fully cooperate with the SILC in the nomination and appointment process for the SILC in the state;
- 7.8. The DSE shall make timely and prompt payments to Part B funded SILCs and CILs:
1. When the reimbursement method is used, the DSE must make a payment within 30 calendar days after receipt of the billing, unless the agency or pass-through entity reasonably believes the request to be improper;
 2. When necessary, the DSE will advance payments to Part B funded SILCs and CILs to cover its estimated disbursement needs for an initial period generally geared to the mutually agreed upon disbursing cycle; and
 3. The DSE will accept requests for advance payments and reimbursements at least monthly when electronic fund transfers are not used, and as often as necessary when electronic fund transfers are used, in accordance with the provisions of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act (15 U.S.C. 1693-1693r).

The signature below indicates this entity/agency's agreement to: serve as the DSE and fulfill all the responsibilities in Sec. 704(c) of the Act; affirm the State will comply with the aforementioned assurances during the three-year period of this SPIL; and develop, with the SILC, and ensure that the SILC resource plan is necessary and sufficient (in compliance with section 8, indicator (6) below) for the SILC to fulfill its statutory duties and authorities under Sec. 705(c) of the Act, consistent with the approved SPIL.¹

Name and Title of DSE director/authorized representative

Signature

Date

Electronic signature may be used for the purposes of submission, but hard copy of signature must be kept on file by the SILC.

8.1 Assurances

Scott Williamson acting on behalf of the SILC Montana Statewide Independent Living Council located at 136 Franklin St SW, Ronan, MT 89864, swilliam4989@gmail.com 45 CFR 1329.14 assures that:

- (1) The SILC regularly (not less than annually) provides the appointing authority recommendations for eligible appointments;
- (2) The SILC is composed of the requisite members set forth in the Act;¹
- (3) The SILC terms of appointment adhere to the Act;¹
- (4) The SILC is not established as an entity within a state agency in accordance with 45 CFR Sec. 1329.14(b);
- (5) The SILC will make the determination of whether it wants to utilize DSE staff to carry out the functions of the SILC;
 - a. The SILC must inform the DSE if it chooses to utilize DSE staff;
 - b. The SILC assumes management and responsibility of such staff with regard to activities and functions performed for the SILC in accordance with the Act.¹
- (6) The SILC shall ensure all program activities are accessible to people with disabilities;
- (7) The State Plan shall provide assurances that the designated State entity, any other agency, office, or entity of the State will not interfere with operations of the SILC, except as provided by law and regulation and;
- (8) The SILC actively consults with unserved and underserved populations in urban and rural areas that include, indigenous populations as appropriate for State Plan development as described in Sec. 713(b)(7) the Act regarding Authorized Uses of Funds.¹

Section 8.2 Indicators of Minimum Compliance

Indicators of minimum compliance for Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILC) as required by the Rehabilitation Act (Section 706(b), 29 U.S.C. Sec 796d-1(b)), as amended and supported by 45 CFR 1329.14-1329.16; and Assurances for Designated State Entities (DSE) as permitted by Section 704(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. Sec. 796c(c)(4)), as amended.

(a) STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL INDICATORS. –

(1) SILC written policies and procedures must include:

- a. A method for recruiting members, reviewing applications, and regularly providing recommendations for eligible appointments to the appointing authority;
- b. A method for identifying and resolving actual or potential disputes and conflicts of interest that are in compliance with State and federal law;
- c. A process to hold public meetings and meet regularly as prescribed in 45 CFR 1329.15(a)(3);
- d. A process and timelines for advance notice to the public of SILC meetings in compliance with State and federal law and 45 CFR 1329.15(a)(3);
- e. A process and timeline for advance notice to the public for SILC “Executive Session” meetings, that are closed to the public, that follow applicable federal and State laws;
 - i. “Executive Session” meetings should be rare and only take place to discuss confidential SILC issues such as but not limited to staffing.
 - ii. Agendas for “Executive Session” meetings must be made available to the public, although personal identifiable information regarding SILC staff shall not be included;
- f. A process and timelines for the public to request reasonable accommodations to participate during a public Council meeting;
- g. A method for developing, seeking and incorporating public input into, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating implementation of the State Plan as required in 45 CFR 1329.17; and
- h. A process to verify centers for independent living are eligible to sign the State Plan in compliance with 45 CFR 1329.17(d)(2)(iii).

(2) The SILC maintains regular communication with the appointing authority to ensure efficiency and timeliness of the appointment process.

(3) The SILC maintains individual training plans for members that adhere to the SILC Training and Technical Assistance Center’s SILC training curriculum.

- (4) The SILC receives public input into the development of the State Plan for Independent Living in accordance with 45 CFR 1329.17(f) ensuring:
- a. Adequate documentation of the State Plan development process, including but not limited to, a written process setting forth how input will be gathered from the state's centers for independent living and individuals with disabilities throughout the state, and the process for how the information collected is considered.
 - b. All meetings regarding State Plan development and review are open to the public and provides advance notice of such meetings in accordance with existing State and federal laws and 45 CFR 1329.17(f)(2)(i)-(ii);
 - c. Meetings seeking public input regarding the State Plan provides advance notice of such meetings in accordance with existing State and federal laws, and 45 CFR 1329.17(f)(2)(i);
 - d. Public meeting locations, where public input is being taken, are accessible to all people with disabilities, including, but not limited to:
 - i. proximity to public transportation,
 - ii. physical accessibility, and
 - iii. effective communication and accommodations that include auxiliary aids and services, necessary to make the meeting accessible to all people with disabilities.
 - e. Materials available electronically must be 508 compliant and, upon request, available in alternative and accessible format including other commonly spoken languages.
- (5) The SILC monitors, reviews and evaluates the State Plan in accordance with 45 CFR 1329.15(a)(2) ensuring:
- a. Timely identification of revisions needed due to any material change in State law, state organization, policy or agency operations that affect the administration of the State Plan approved by the Administration for Community Living.
- (6) The SILC State Plan resource plan includes:
- a. Sufficient funds received from:
 - i. Title VII, Part B funds;
 - 1. If the resource plan includes Title VII, Part B funds, the State Plan provides justification of the percentage of Part

B funds to be used if the percentage exceeds 30 percent of Title VII, Part B funds received by the State;

- ii. Funds for innovation and expansion activities under Sec. 101(a)(18) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 721(a)(18), as applicable;
- iii. Other public and private sources.

b. The funds needed to support:

- i. Staff/personnel;
- ii. Operating expenses;
- iii. Council compensation and expenses;
- iv. Meeting expenses including meeting space, alternate formats, interpreters, and other accommodations;
- v. Resources to attend and/or secure training and conferences for staff and council members and;
- vi. Other costs as appropriate.

The signature below indicates the SILC's agreement to comply with the aforementioned assurances and indicators:

Scott Williamson

Name of SILC chairperson

Signature

Date

Electronic signature may be used for the purposes of submission, but hard copy of signature must be kept on file by the SILC.

Section 9: Signatures

The signatures below are of the SILC chairperson and at least 51 percent of the directors of the centers for independent living listed in section 6.3. These signatures indicate that the Montana Statewide Independent Living Council and the centers for independent living in the state agree with and intend to fully implement this SPIL’s content. These signatures also indicate that this SPIL is complete and ready for submission to the Independent Living Administration, Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The effective date of this SPIL is October 1, _____ (year)

SIGNATURE OF SILC CHAIRPERSON DATE

Tami Hoar
NAME OF SILC CHAIRPERSON

Summit Independent Living Center
NAME OF CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CIL)

SIGNATURE OF CIL DIRECTOR

DATE

Tom Osborn

NAME OF CIL DIRECTOR

North Central Independent Living Services

NAME OF CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CIL)

DRAFT

SIGNATURE OF CIL DIRECTOR

DATE

Scott Birkenbuel

NAME OF CIL DIRECTOR

Montana Independent Living Program dba Ability Montana

NAME OF CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CIL)

DRAFT

SIGNATURE OF CIL DIRECTOR

DATE

Carlos Ramahlo

NAME OF CIL DIRECTOR

Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow

NAME OF CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CIL)

Electronic signatures may be used for the purposes of submission, but hard copy of signature must be kept on file by the SILC.

¹ 1329.17(d)(2)(iii)

DRAFT