



Quarterly Meeting

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 1pm to 4pm & Thursday, May 8, 2025, 9am to 12pm
Crowne Plaza, Cypress 2 Room, 4728 Constitution Avenue, Baton Rouge**

Quarterly Meeting (Day 1) Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 1:00pm to 4:00pm

Member Name		Role/ Representation	Attendance	Appointment Date
Pamela	Allen		Virtual	10/25/24
Brandy	Bordelon		In-person	02/03/23
Rashad	Bristo		Virtual	7/19/24
Brenda	Cosse		Virtual	02/03/23
Shaely	Cheramie		Absent	06/19/20
Danielle	Credeur	Secretary	In-person	10/27/22
Randy	Dartez	Director of a Center for Independent Living	Absent	10/27/22
Jamie	Duplechine		Virtual	10/18/24
Jill	Egle		Virtual	9/6/24
Claudia	Garofalo	At-Large (Executive Committee)	Absent	9/11/20
Alisha	Hammond		In-person	07/19/24
Antoinette	Harrell		Virtual	9/6/24
Esther	Jett	Vice-Chairperson	In-person	6/19/20 (2 nd term)
Teriyonda	Murray	Chairperson	Absent	10/27/22
		Ex-officio Members		
Robbie	Gray	LA Rehabilitation Services	In-person	8/16/24
Bernard	Brown	LDH- Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities	Absent	10/30/20 (2 nd term)
Cheri	Crain	Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs	In-person	10/02/20
Charlene	Gradney	LDH- Office of Behavioral Health	Virtual	6/19/20 (2 nd term)
Welma	Jackson	LA Dept of Veteran Affairs	Absent	06/19/20
Juon	Wilson	LA Housing Corporation	Absent	07/31/20

Guests: Ruth Cook, Tamara Crane, Phillip Credeur, Kristie Curtis, Yavonka George, Rosemary Morales, Patricia Yoruw

Call to Order (including reminder of [Meeting Protocols](#))

1:00pm

Pledge of Allegiance

[Roll Call](#)

Mission Statement

Approval of the [February 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)

Present recommendations for [By-Laws](#) changes to be voted on Thursday 1:20pm

[Louisiana Rehabilitation Services](#) – Melissa Bayham

1:30pm

Indicator #2.1.1: Collaboration with Louisiana Workforce Commission is achieved through the SILC Executive Director holding membership on the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council to report SILC activities and reporting LRC information at quarterly SILC meetings.

Indicator #2.1.3: The SILC advocates to Louisiana legislators in support of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services within the Louisiana Workforce Commission and reports advocacy efforts at least once quarterly at SILC meetings.

In the meeting, discussed the number of participants in vocational rehabilitation and transition programs, as well as the current staffing situation. She also mentioned the creation of a new state agency combining the Workforce Commission and economic stability programs.

State Government Agency Updates regarding SPIL Section 2: Services 1:45pm

[Office of Behavioral Health](#) - Charlene Gradney

[Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs](#) - Cheri Crain

[Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities](#) - Bernard Brown

[Louisiana Department of Veteran Affairs](#) - Welma Jackson

A question was raised about the changes in providers and the process of creating a group home for deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing individuals. Rosemary Morales from the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities clarified that group homes are licensed through health standards and suggested contacting them for further information. The meeting also included updates from the Office of Behavioral Health, the Office of Elderly Affairs, and the Louisiana Department of Veteran Affairs.

SILC Quarterly Budget Update

2:30pm

- [FY 2025 Financial Report through April 30](#) - Fiscal Agent (NHILC)
- SILC Bank Account Balance: \$2,523.15 – Brandy Bordelon, SILC Treasurer
- [SILC Budget Request for FY 2026](#)

The meeting focused on the budget for the Silc, which includes personnel, travel, operating, and indirect costs. The current budget has a deficit in travel, which the team is trying to address. They discussed the possibility of amending the budget, but this process is complex and time-consuming. The team also discussed the need to justify their travel expenses and the potential for carpooling to reduce costs. The conversation ended with a discussion on the funding sources for other states' Silcs, with most relying on state allotments or innovation expansion.

The meeting focused on discussing the current budget projections and potential adjustments for the upcoming fiscal year. The team discussed the possibility of a deficit and the need to make adjustments to the budget. They also discussed the need for a new budget for the next fiscal year, which includes an increase in personnel costs and a slight increase in travel expenses. The team also discussed the possibility of hosting meetings in other locations to reduce costs. The conversation ended with a vote to ratify the proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) Reports

3:00 pm

Indicator #1.1.1: CILs updates are presented at each SILC quarterly meeting.

Indicator #2.1.2: CILs promote completion of income taxes for consumers who are employed with referrals to free preparation sites or Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites and provide updates of referrals at quarterly SILC meetings.

Indicator #2.2.4: CILs maintain membership and participation in Louisiana's Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition (EMDAC) and report on EMDAC activities at quarterly SILC meetings.

Indicator #2.3.1: The CILs maintain AT/DME programs to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to equipment as needed, with CILs reporting activities and progress in quarterly SILC meetings.

Indicator #2.3.2: The CILs provide telecommunication access equipment, hearing aids, and ASL interpreting to consumers who are Deaf, have hearing loss, or who have speech impairment and report on activities at each quarterly SILC meeting.

Indicator #2.3.3: The CILs provide referrals to DME providers and LA Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN) and report referrals and related activities at quarterly SILC meetings.

Indicator #3.1.2: The CILs explore resource development sources to provide alternative funding and promote maintenance of current alternative funding, reporting updates at each quarterly SILC meeting.

- [Resources on Independent Living](#) (RIL)- Alisha Hammond
 - [RIL FY24 PPR Report Baton Rouge](#)
 - [RIL FY24 PPR Report New Orleans](#)
- [Southwest Louisiana Independence Center](#) (@SLIC)– Phillip Credeur
 - [@SLIC FY24 PPR Report](#)

- [New Horizons Independent Living Center](#) (NHILC) – Patricia Yoruw
 - [NHILC FY24 PPR Report](#)
 - **Consumer Impact Presentation- Ruth Cook**

In the meeting, SILC presented quarterly updates from January to March. The updates included the composition of agencies, core services provided, and the number of services offered. SILC also discussed outreach activities, including visits to nursing homes and senior living facilities, and participation in transition fairs. The team also discussed their efforts to increase participation in IL initiatives and their interactions with Acl representatives. There were some technical issues with the audio, which were addressed by the team. Brenda asked for clarification on the underserved parishes, which was explained by Yavonka and SILC. Yavonka also requested the team to share information about anyone in need of services in their parishes.

SILC discussed their progress on various initiatives, including the Louisiana Deaf Leadership Development program, voter registration assistance, and the new Veteran Direct Care program. They also highlighted their assistive technology loaner closet, which has issued out 642 pieces of equipment with a value of approximately \$325,000. SILC also mentioned their innovative strategies for funding, including the 7B and 7C funding, and the Governor's office available affairs program. They also discussed their home and community-based program, which currently serves 136 consumers with 192 direct service workers. SILC also mentioned their participation in the Ticket to Work program, which has brought in \$17,426 from January to March. They also discussed their youth transition program, which has worked with 12 students this quarter. SILC also mentioned their partnership with the State's Department of Ed in their diff grant, which aims to develop written resource materials and videos to encourage transitional planning.

In the meeting, Yavonka discussed the impact of the executive order on independent living centers and the need for Congressional leaders to advocate for them. She mentioned a meeting with NCIL and other centers for independent living to discuss reimbursement issues. Yavonka also shared her experiences with the Ticket to Work program and the importance of peer support groups for individuals with disabilities. The team discussed the possibility of collaborating with other agencies, such as the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and the need for better communication and understanding between different organizations. They also discussed the importance of educating the community about the services provided by independent living centers.

CILs and SILC Members Report

3:45pm

Objective #3.2: SILC and the CILs utilize best practices of successful SILCs and CILs

Indicator #3.2.1: SILC members and the CILs participate in webinars, conference calls, and other training and report on new and creative ideas learned at each quarterly SILC meeting.

- **Report regarding SILC Congress held in March**

Indicator #3.2.2: SILC members and CILs partner with other SILCs, CILs and other disability-related organizations to foster best practices and report on new and creative ideas learned at each quarterly SILC meeting.

- **Disability Coalition meetings**

The meeting involved discussions on various topics. SILC discussed the coordination of a statewide disability coalition meeting with other state and regional organizations. The meeting aimed to discuss issues affecting the disability community at the federal and state levels.

- **Empowerment Through Employment Virtual Conference- August 13**
SILC also mentioned the upcoming Empowerment Through Employment Virtual Conference, which will be held on August 13th. The conference will be free and will feature sessions on employment for people with disabilities. SILC also mentioned the need for more jobs for people with disabilities in their area.

Indicator #2.2.5: SILC members and CILs participate in advocacy and education to decision-makers for accessible, affordable housing for individuals with disabilities and report activities and progress at each quarterly meeting.

Recess

4:00pm

Quarterly Meeting (Day 2) Thursday, May 8, 2025, from 9:00am to 12:00pm

Member Name		Role/ Representation	Attendance	Appointment Date
Pamela	Allen		Absent	10/25/24
Brandy	Bordelon		In-person	02/03/23
Rashad	Bristo		Virtual	7/19/24
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Guests: Phillip Credeur, Yavonka George, Patricia Yoruw, Ruth Cook, Kristie Curtis, Nicole Flores, Jay Cochran

Call to Order (including reminder of [Meeting Protocols](#))

9:00am

Roll Call

Mission Statement

SporTran, Brittney Darnell

9:15am

Indicator #2.2.2: SILC members receive updates at quarterly SILC meetings from a state or local transportation representative regarding transportation issues that affect individuals with disabilities in order to provide advocacy when issues are identified.

Brittney from Sportran begins to present information about their services for the disability community in Shreveport and Caddo Parish. She mentions they provide fare-free service, but experiences technical difficulties that make it hard for others to hear her clearly. The group works to resolve the audio issues so Brittney can restart her presentation about Sportran's accessible transportation options.

In the meeting, Brittney discussed the shared ride service provided by Sportran to the community, emphasizing its importance for independence. She mentioned its services starting from 4:20 in the morning and continuing until 1:30 the next morning. Mark inquired about partnering with Uber or Lyft, to which Brittney responded that they were in discussions but no decisions had been made yet. Bambi had a question about how Brittney's organization sustains itself with proposed Federal cuts in funding. Brittney explained that they secure funding through city grants and private donations. Jill asked if there was a way to pass a bill that would allow all special need adults to get around, but Brittney was unsure of the specifics. Brittney confirmed that Sportran serves the Shreveport and Bulger areas only.

Disability Awareness Day at the Louisiana State Capitol on June 2nd

Mark Raymond, Split Second Foundation

9:30am

Mark then took over the meeting to discuss the upcoming Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol, hosted by the Governor's Council on Disability Affairs. He shared that 22 partner organizations would be participating and that the event would involve a brief

program, legislative networking, and recognition on the House and Senate floor. Mark also mentioned a panel discussion titled "Disability is an Economic Issue, How Disability Inclusion Drives Economic Growth."

Orthotics and Prosthetics Medicaid Reimbursement Plateau, Clint Snell 9:45am

Indicator #1.1.8: At least once a year, other disability-related advocacy groups are invited to present information about their organization.

Indicator #3.1.1: SILC members advocate to the legislature for the SILC and CILs and report activities at quarterly SILC meetings at least once a year.

Mr. Clint on Medicaid reimbursement for prosthetics and orthotics in Louisiana. He highlights that reimbursement rates have been stagnant since 1991, with Louisiana currently receiving only 56% of the Medicare rate, significantly lower than neighboring states. Mr. Clint emphasizes the need for increased funding to improve patient care and attract qualified professionals. Dr. Antoinette Harrell, an amputee, raises concerns about the challenges in obtaining and adjusting prosthetics, especially for Medicaid patients. The meeting also touched on the issue of low reimbursement rates for prosthetics, which has not been changed since 1991. SILC agreed to draft a letter in support of increasing these rates.

Updates on Emergency Preparedness

10:00am

Indicator #2.2.3: SILC members receive updates at quarterly SILC meetings regarding emergency preparedness at least once per year.

- [Colorado's Access & Functional Needs Conference](#)
- [Partnership for Inclusive Disasters & SILC's Response to the proposed Master Action Plan for Hurricane Francine](#)

Bambi Polotzola shared information about the Colorado's Access & Functional Needs Conference and the response to the proposed Master Action Plan for Hurricane Francine.

SILC Members Reports

10:15am

- Objective #1.1: Individuals with disabilities throughout the state are informed of Independent Living philosophy and services.
- Indicator #1.1.2: Quarterly presentation by SILC members any services or programs that will benefit the disability community.
- Indicator #1.1.3: SILC members promote and attend disability-related events at least once a quarter to educate and raise awareness of the Independent Living philosophy, programs, initiatives, and CIL services.
- Indicator #1.1.5: Updates are provided by SILC members at each quarterly SILC meeting regarding activities/events occurring in each member's local community that might provide opportunities for dissemination of Independent Living services and philosophy.

Bylaws and Policies and Procedures

10:45am

Phillip Credeur, Bylaws and Policy & Procedure Committee Chairperson

Vote on Approval of amended By-Laws

Objective #4.1: The SILC will continue to pursue full autonomy.

Indicator #4.1.1: The SILC Chair appoints a Resource Development Committee within the first SPIL year to explore ways to support independent SILC operations and receives committee reports at each SILC meeting.

Indicator #4.1.4: The Policy and Procedure manual and By-Laws will be reviewed at least once a year and updated as needed to reflect any operational or procedural changes, including virtual meetings to allow for a quorum.

Indicator #4.3.2: SILC will add new fiscal process to By-laws.

The SILC discusses and approved updates to their bylaws, which have been reviewed and edited by a committee. They plan to update their policies and procedures manual next, with a focus on preparing to handle their own finances by October 2026. The council agrees to continue the bylaws committee to work on policies and procedures, aiming to vote on changes at the February 2026 meeting.

Compliance, Reporting, Training

11:30am

Objective #4.2: The SILC achieves compliance with federal SILC standards and indicators.

Indicator #4.2.1: The SILC Chair will review an evaluation tool quarterly to note progress on fulfillment of SILC standards and indicators and will report findings at quarterly SILC meetings.

Indicator #4.2.2: The SILC Chair, Executive Committee and CIL Executive Directors will formulate an Orientation Training Plan during the first quarter of the SPIL for each SILC member to complete training, with members reporting at each quarterly meeting on their progress.

They also discuss compliance reporting, training plans, and the need for members to complete financial disclosure forms and ethics training.

Executive Director's Report

Bambi Polotzola

11:45am

Financial Disclosures Forms are due May 15.

SILC FY 2024 PPR Report

Bambi Polotzola reminded members that their annual Financial Disclosure Form was due by May 15. She also shared that the SILC's 2024 PPR report was completed and submitted to ACL.

Future Meeting Dates

August 6 & 7, 2025- New Horizons Independent Living Center, Shreveport, LA

November 5 & 6, 2025

February 4 & 5, 2026

Adjournment

12:00pm