

Idaho State Independent Living Council

Federal Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report

(October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023)



Photo Credit: Michael Lefevor, near Montpelier Idaho



Idaho State Independent Living Council

The Idaho State Independent Living Council (SILC) actively engages in activities that help provide Idahoans with disabilities a greater voice in obtaining services that are consumer responsive, cost effective and community based. We are solutions oriented: collaborating with people with disabilities, public agencies, and private, non-profit and for-profit organizations to improve the quality of life and increase independence for Idahoan's with disabilities.

The SILC upholds the principles of the Independent Living movement, maximizing opportunities available to all Idahoans:

- Consumer control
- Peer support
- Self-help
- Self-determination
- Equity
- Equal access
- Positive systemic change through individual and systemic advocacy

Idaho SILC Mission

The State Independent Living Council (SILC) is Idaho's only statewide, cross-disability organization dedicated to independent living and full community inclusion governed by a majority of people with disabilities in service to people with disabilities across the lifespan.



2023 Idaho SILC members and staff

Mission:

The Idaho SILC's mission is to promote the independent living philosophy for all Idahoans with disabilities: choice, self-determination and access for all.

Vision:

Idahoans across disabilities and lifespan live in their community of choice with the services and supports they need to reach their full potential.

Letter from the Chair

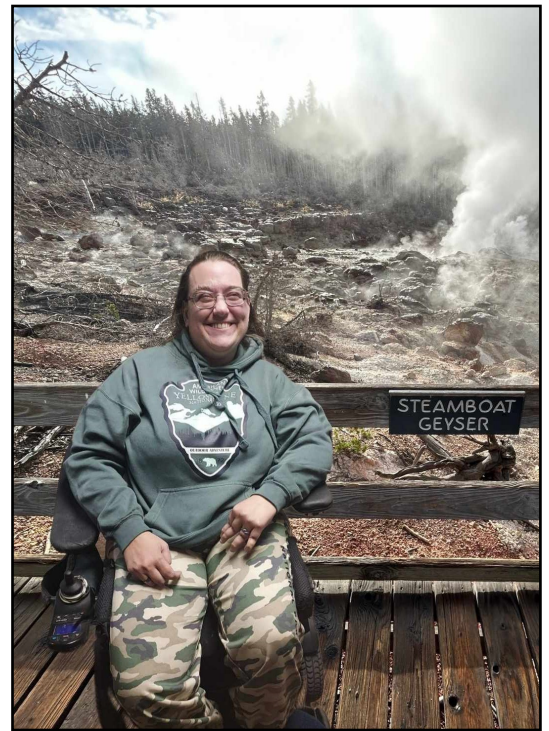
Hello from the Idaho State Independent Living Council (SILC)! We've got a wonderful group of people serving our state. As Chair, I'm blessed to serve alongside them.

The SILC has been very busy. We have grown in the last year and gained new members who have added their strong voices and experiences to those of us oldies but goodies. The SILC continues to monitor and work on fair housing, the direct care workforce crisis and emergency preparedness, not least of all, helping disabled Idahoans and parents figure out and set up ABLE accounts for themselves and children with disabilities.

We have also had a few interesting trainings throughout this past year. There have been trainings by the representatives of several state agencies that are members on our Council and an Emergency Preparedness training and exercise by SILC staff. In July, the Council took part in an Active Listening training where we learned skills that definitely have improved our communication and understanding of others. We even got to practice active listening with each other, it was quite fun and educational!

In August, SILC members and staff, combined with staff and Board members from Idaho Centers for Independent Living (CILs), met for a two day training by Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), refreshing our memories on why independent living is so important.

This council has been one of the best I have served on and heartily encourage other Idahoans to check us out.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shiloh Blackburn".

Shiloh Blackburn
Chair Idaho State Independent Living Council

Letter from the Director

Our work in any given year is a blur of activity defined by flurries of advocacy, planning - drafting and redrafting, reporting, emergency planning, ABLE savings technical assistance, projects, meetings, opportunities, disappointments, lessons, regrouping, connecting and partnerships.

The SILC is the only statewide board or council made up of a majority of people with disabilities and staffed by a majority of people with disabilities. We are uniquely positioned to reach and listen to the voices of disabled Idahoans. Indeed, many of our members struggle to find and keep direct support professionals, housing and transportation.

When Idahoans with disabilities don't have access to quality health care, physical access to public spaces, transportation to get to church or the grocery store, or have lost the feeling of connection that every person needs; we work to find a solution.

We often look on feeling helpless as former and potential council members are institutionalized due to the lack of community services and support.

Yet, we are not helpless.

As long as we remain united and committed to each other - across disabilities and lifespan - amplifying the voices of disabled Idahoans, we will achieve the vision of community choice and inclusion.

The SILC reviews the progress of the current State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) quarterly and through our partnerships with the Centers for Independent Living, we anticipate areas of need and take a deeper dive during the triennial statewide assessment. The SPIL is our opportunity to demonstrate that we have heard and are willing to act. Independent Living is not about who saves the day – it is about how we save the moment, with and for, each other.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mel Leviton".

Mel Leviton
Executive Director

Who Makes Up the Idaho SILC

Idaho State Independent Living Council Members

| | |
|--|--|
| Shiloh Blackburn..... | Council Chair-Region VI Person with a Disability |
| Brittany Shipley..... | Vice-Chair - Parent Advocate - Region V |
| Justyne Collins..... | Region I Person with a Disability |
| Eric Peterson..... | Region II Person with a Disability |
| Erik Kimes..... | Region III Person with a Disability |
| Larry Henrie..... | Region IV Person with a Disability |
| Tara Rowe..... | Region V Person with a Disability |
| Anhora Snodgrass..... | At Large Person with a Disability - Region II |
| Shannon Morgan..... | At Large Person with a Disability - Region III |
| Tara Marie Adams..... | At Large Person with a Disability - Region IV |
| | |
| Sherri Boelter..... | CIL Representative - Disability Action Center NW |
| Michael Lefevor..... | CIL Director |
| Brianna Tamayo..... | CIL Representative - Life, A Center for Independent Living |
| | |
| Candy Harris (Termed Off 5/28/23)..... | Region IV Person with a Disability |

Ex-Officio Members

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Steve Achabal..... | Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired |
| Alan Aamodt..... | Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation |
| Erin Olsen..... | Idaho Commission on Aging |
| Russell Salyards..... | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare |

Idaho State Independent Living Council Staff

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mel Leviton..... | Executive Director |
| Jami Davis..... | Program Specialist |
| Megan Bates..... | Financial Specialist |
| Janey Bruesch..... | Administrative Assistant II |

We Live in All Corners of Idaho*

Percentage of People with Disabilities by County

| County | Percentage | County | Percentage |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Ada | 10.4% | Gem | 19.6% |
| Adams | 16.8% | Gooding | 14.9% |
| Bannock | 15.6% | Idaho | 20.2% |
| Bear Lake | 14.8% | Jefferson | 10.2% |
| Benewah | 20.7% | Jerome | 12.5% |
| Bingham | 16.1% | Kootenai | 15% |
| Blaine | 11% | Latah | 11.8% |
| Boise | 14.3% | Lemhi | 21.2% |
| Bonner | 16.6% | Lewis | 13.8% |
| Bonneville | 13.6% | Lincoln | 14.1% |
| Boundary | 16.7% | Madison | 8.5% |
| Butte | 18% | Minidoka | 14.9% |
| Camas | 19.5% | Nez Perce | 18.2% |
| Canyon | 14.6% | Oneida | 15.9% |
| Caribou | 11.8% | Owyhee | 17.4% |
| Cassia | 14.3% | Payette | 16.7% |
| Clark | 12.4% | Power | 13.5% |
| Clearwater | 20.5% | Shoshone | 25.2% |
| Custer | 25.1% | Teton | 6% |
| Elmore | 17.9% | Twin Falls | 14% |
| Franklin | 13.4% | Valley | 13% |
| Fremont | 17.5% | Washington | 18.2% |

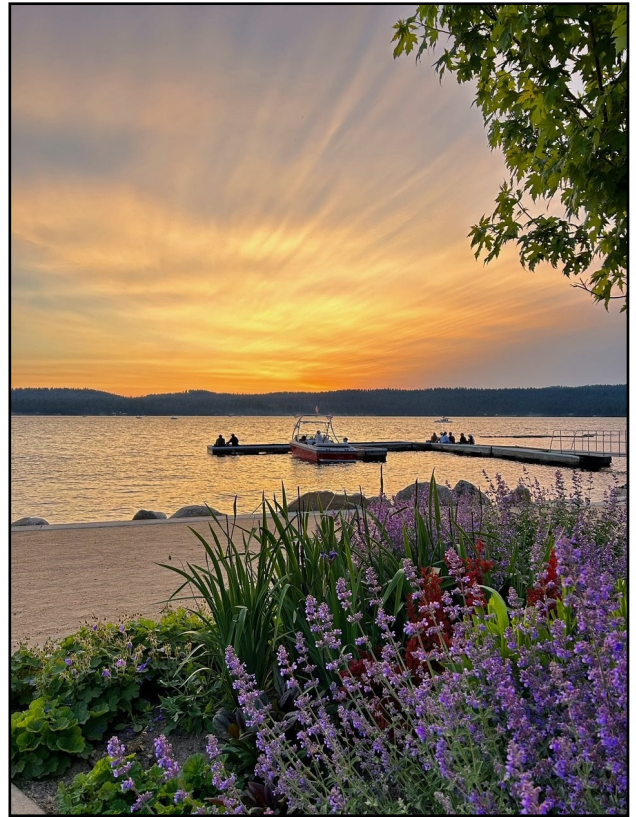


Photo credit: Tara Adams, McCall Idaho

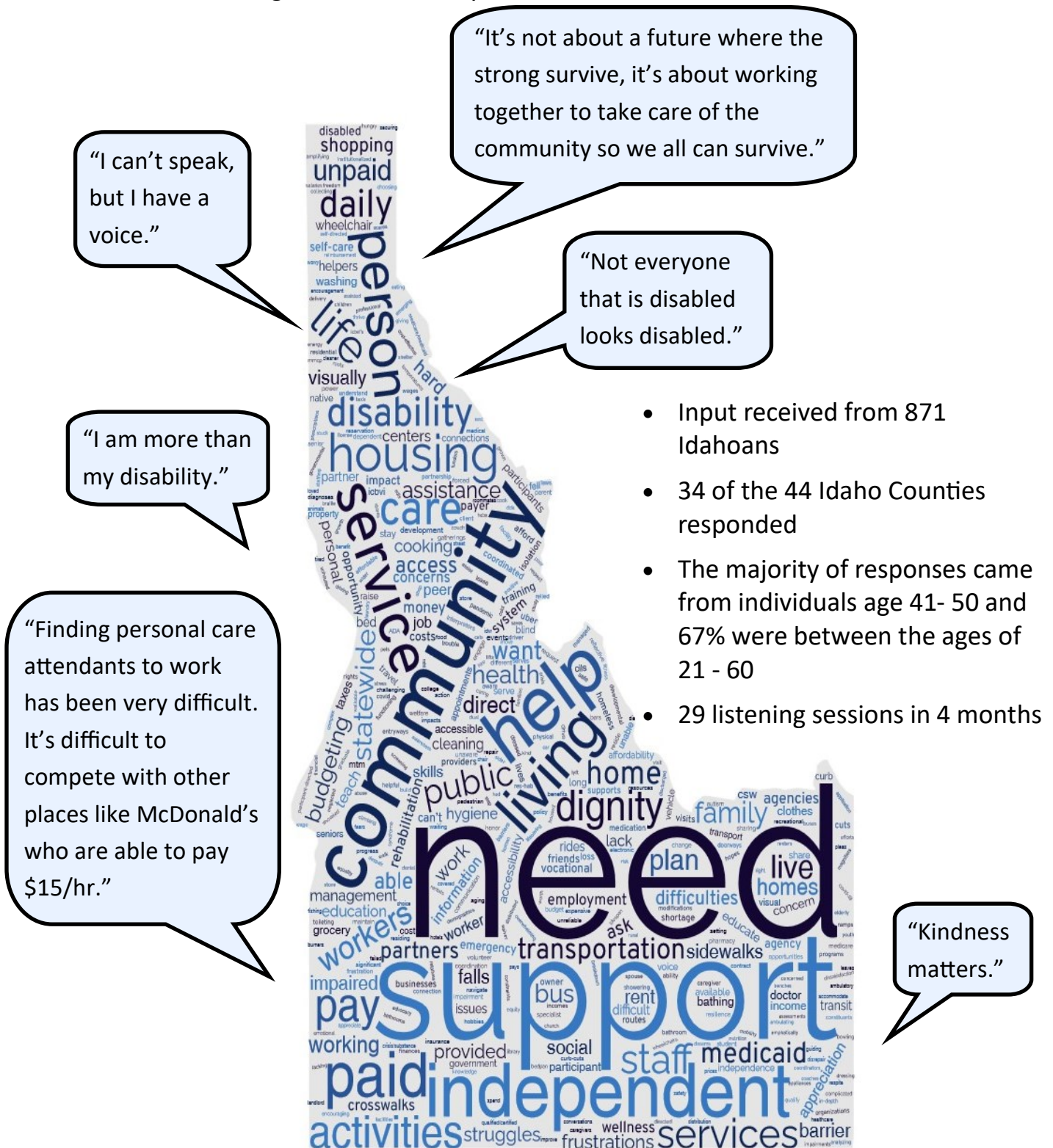


Photo Credit: Tara Rowe, Twin Falls Idaho

* U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Results from the 2022 Statewide Needs Assessment

The Idaho State Independent Living Council gathered the information received from the Statewide Needs Assessment. The illustration below reflects the words and phrases used most often in answering the online survey.



2022 Statewide Needs Assessment Takeaways

Activities of Daily Living

72% of respondents who indicated they need help with activities of daily living are **under the age of 60**. The help needed includes cooking, showering, getting out of bed, cleaning, getting and taking medication, getting dressed, and shopping.

Direct Care

72 respondents replied that they went without direct care for varying lengths of time and 34.7% reported that they **still** did not have help at home, or that they have given up getting help at home. More than 70% of the people who answered this question were under the age of 60.

Housing

27% of respondents indicated that affordability is a housing barrier, while 23% cited property taxes. Another 16% of survey participants relayed that rent increases are creating a housing barrier.

Transportation

71% of respondents relayed at least some difficulties getting where they wanted or needed to go. Those over the age of 60 were the majority of respondents indicating that they are never able to go where they want by using public transit (bus), personal vehicles, crosswalks, sidewalks, and entryways.

An open-ended question in the survey was, “If you could educate (teach) people (businesses, government, family, friends, other people with disabilities) on ONE topic, what would it be?” We expected answers such as: disability etiquette, Americans with Disability Act (ADA) laws, and disability rights, but the answers we received the most, centered around connection and acceptance. Statements like, “We are just like everyone else”, “Patience”, “Kindness”, “Inclusion”, and “Respect” were mentioned repeatedly. Surveys generally collect quantitative data and while important, the responses received show the qualitative perspective often missed.

We Came Together as a State

The State Independent Living Council brought Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) to Idaho to provide training for 49 staff and board members across the Idaho Independent Living Network. ILRU operates the IL-NET training and technical assistance nationally for the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and Statewide Independent Living Councils.

ILRU provided an intensive two-day training giving insight into the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) as it relates to the work done daily by IL Network staff, and ultimately, the impact of that work on Idahoans across disabilities. Participants learned more about the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and our responsibilities as SILC and CIL staff and board members.

The training was a great opportunity for people to meet others from across our state who are doing the work of IL, and learn from each other, sharing strengths, struggles and vision for the future. This in-depth training was the first conducted by ILRU in which everyone was invited to the table - all were included - from the frontline staff, program managers, and coordinators to Council and Board members and executive directors from the various organizations.

Participants shared on the event evaluation that they gained greater confidence with compliance and assurances, better understood funding and laws surrounding advocacy and how the Centers and SILC work together to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Idaho. One commenter shared, “We are stronger when we learn from each other and unite. But it will take strength-based understanding and open-mindedness to make it happen from each individual involved.”



Photo Credit: Tara Rowe, Nampa Idaho

Meet People Where They Are

We strive not to be defined by our disabilities, though others often define us by perceived and real limitations. Systems demand that people with disabilities meet a clear definition for a specific disability to gain access to services and support, including financial and medical assistance. We live a constant contradiction of proving we are worthy and productive enough, while also proving we are disabled enough to access to full community participation. Support and services are not limited to home health care providers. Nor are they limited to social safety net programs. Support and services also include curb cuts, accessible parking, ASL interpreters, readers and much more. No two people with the same or similar disability are alike. Each disabled person is an expert in what they need to live fully in their community. At least 25% of every community - ethnicity, color, identity, age and socioeconomic group - have a disability. Some communities, due to health and economic disparities include greater percentages of disabled people. The walls we create are the real barrier to inclusion and understanding. The SILC is involved in all sectors of community life: housing and homelessness, criminal justice and survivor projects, harm reduction and public health, economic development and education. Our Council is made up of givers who participate in many organizations outside of traditional disability service agencies.

Council Member Workgroups and Committees

The State Independent Living Council values connections within and outside of the disability community. Strengthening these bonds benefits Idahoans in every corner of the State. A few of the workgroups and committees Council members take part in are:

- Community NOW
- Idaho Council on Domestic Violence and Victim Assistance
- Idaho Inclusive Emergency Coalition
- Idaho State Juvenile Justice Commission
- Interagency Governance Team
- Land and Water Conservation Advisory Committee
- Molina Member Advisory Committee
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Coeur d'Alene
- National Federation of the Blind of Idaho
- Region 4 Mental Health Board
- St Alphonsus Deaf & Hard of Hearing Advisory Board
- Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Project



Idaho State Independent Living Council

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