



The LINC Lowdown

August 2026



Make Your Voice Heard: Connecting with Candidates This Election Season

August is a great time to get involved in the political process. Across Idaho, candidates often attend community events, state and county fairs, festivals, and local gatherings where voters have the opportunity to meet them, ask questions, and share what matters most to their communities.

For people with disabilities, these conversations are an important opportunity **to make sure disability issues are part of the public discussion.** Disability impacts every community, and issues like accessible transportation, affordable housing, healthcare access, employment opportunities, emergency preparedness, and protecting disability rights affect Idahoans across the state.

Organizations like American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and the REV UP Voting campaign encourage people with disabilities and allies to participate beyond casting a ballot. Civic engagement includes talking with candidates, attending forums, and helping elected officials understand the experiences and priorities of the disability community.

If you attend a fair or community event where candidates are present, consider stopping by their booth or speaking with campaign representatives. A few questions you might ask include:

- How will you support the inclusion of people with disabilities in your community?
- What will you do to improve accessibility in Idaho?
- How will you ensure people with disabilities have a voice in decisions that affect their lives?

You can also share your personal experiences. A short conversation about barriers you have faced or changes you would like to see can help candidates better understand disability issues.

If you are hosting a candidate forum or community event, remember that accessibility matters. Make sure locations, parking, entrances, seating, communication, and materials are accessible so people with disabilities can fully participate.

Whether you attend a state fair, local event, candidate forum, or community gathering, your voice has power. Building relationships with candidates and elected officials helps ensure disability perspectives are included in conversations about Idaho's future.

This election season, show up, ask questions, and make sure disability is part of the conversation.

(LINC is a nonpartisan organization. We do not endorse political candidates or parties, and we do not engage in lobbying. Our focus is on education, advocacy, and empowering people with disabilities to live independently.)



Key Changes Idahoans with Disabilities Need to Know: July 2026 Updates

Several policy changes taking effect in 2026 may impact Idahoans with disabilities, Medicaid members, and people who rely on community-based supports. Here are some important updates to know.

Idaho Medicaid Managed Care Delayed

The planned transition of Idaho Medicaid to a managed care model has been delayed. The new target implementation date is **January 1, 2030**. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) will continue sharing updates as the process moves forward, including future opportunities for public input.

Medicaid members, families, providers, and advocates are encouraged to stay engaged to help ensure future changes protect access to healthcare, transportation, home- and community-based services, and other supports that help people with disabilities live independently.

Medicaid Service Animal Benefit Update

Idaho Medicaid has issued updates regarding the **Service Animal Benefit**. Changes to Medicaid benefits can affect how people with disabilities access important supports, and individuals who use or are seeking service animal-related

services should review the latest guidance and contact Idaho Medicaid or their providers with questions.

Service animals can be essential tools for independence, safety, and community participation. People affected by this change should keep copies of Medicaid notices and seek assistance from disability advocates if they need help understanding their options.

Medicaid Work Requirements and Exemptions

Federal Medicaid work requirements are being implemented nationwide. Many people with disabilities may qualify for exemptions, including individuals who are medically frail or disabled, veterans with disabilities, caregivers, students, pregnant individuals, and certain former foster youth.

Other Idaho Changes

Changes to county medical indigent funding and reductions in local transportation funding may also affect Idaho communities. Accessible transportation is especially important for people with disabilities who rely on it for healthcare, employment, and community involvement.

Stay informed, stay connected, and continue making your voice heard. Disability advocacy ensures that people with lived experience are included in decisions that affect their lives.



Next Session of SALT Starting Soon!

Your voice matters. Every person with a disability has the right to make decisions about their own life, speak up for what they believe in, and help create positive change in their community. That's what self-advocacy is all about-and LINC is here to help you build those skills.

Our free, nine-week Self-Advocacy Leadership Training (S.A.L.T.) introduces participants to the tools and confidence needed to speak up, make informed choices, and stand up for their rights. Whether you're new to self-advocacy or looking to strengthen your skills, this training is designed to help you take the next step.

You'll learn how to:

- Speak up for yourself with confidence.
- Make decisions about the services and supports that are right for you.
- Understand your rights and advocate for the life you want.

The training is open to anyone with a disability who wants more control over their own life. If you've ever spoken up for something you believe in, challenged others' expectations, or wanted to make life better for people with disabilities, you're already on the path to becoming a self-advocate.

Interested? Our next session is coming up in September.

Fall 2026 Self-Advocacy Leadership Training
September 15 - November 10

Tuesdays, 10:00-11:30am

Held virtually on Microsoft Teams

No previous experience is required. LINC provides technology training and technical support, and we can even help participants access devices if needed.

Registration is required. Learn more and apply today at lincidaho.org/advocacy.



Preparing for Everyone: Why Disability Inclusion Matters in Disasters

Disasters affect entire communities, but they do not affect everyone equally. People with disabilities, older adults, and others with access and functional needs often face additional barriers during emergencies, including transportation challenges, medical needs, accessible housing concerns, and interruptions to essential supports. That is why it is so important for disability organizations to have a seat at the table before and during disasters.

When severe flooding impacted Caldwell and surrounding Canyon County communities on June 26, LINC became part of the coordinated community response through our leadership role with the [Idaho Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#) (VOAD). Working alongside Canyon County Emergency Management, the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, the American Red Cross, and many other partners, LINC helped develop a bilingual community damage assessment and needs survey to better understand who had been affected and what support was needed.

More than 120 households completed the survey. Because disability and access needs were intentionally included in the assessment, response partners gathered information about medical equipment, disabilities, transportation barriers, household members, financial hardship, and other factors that are often overlooked during disaster response. That information helped identify households with the greatest needs, allowing organizations to prioritize outreach, deploy volunteers more effectively, and connect residents with the right resources more quickly.

The survey also helped inform the coordinated response that led to the creation of a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC), where organizations came together to provide housing assistance, cleanup support, food, disability resources, insurance information, and other recovery services in one accessible location.

This experience demonstrates why LINC remains actively involved in emergency preparedness and response. By having representation on the Idaho VOAD Board and participating in disaster planning and coordination, we help ensure that the voices and needs of people with disabilities are included from the very beginning—not as an afterthought. When accessibility is built into emergency response from the start, the entire community recovers more effectively.



Community Partner Spotlight:

Helping Idahoans Drive Toward Independence

For many people with disabilities, driving represents freedom, independence, and opportunity. It can mean getting to work, attending school, accessing healthcare, or simply visiting family and friends without relying on others. Yet for many Idahoans, finding specialized driver training and adaptive driving services has long been a challenge.

That's why LINC is proud to partner with **Amber Beall**, owner of **Adaptive Driving Idaho**, to help connect people with the resources they need to achieve their driving goals. Adaptive Driving Idaho provides driver rehabilitation services tailored to each individual's needs. Whether someone is learning to drive for the first time, returning to driving after an injury or illness, or needs adaptive equipment to operate a vehicle safely, Amber works one-on-one with clients to identify solutions. Services include comprehensive driving evaluations, behind-the-wheel

training, and recommendations for adaptive equipment such as hand controls, left-foot accelerators, and other vehicle modifications that support safe, independent driving.

Amber also joined LINC's [Independent Idaho](#) podcast to discuss adaptive driving, common misconceptions, and the life-changing impact that accessible driver education can have. Her message is simple: with the right evaluation, training, and equipment, many people with disabilities can achieve greater independence behind the wheel.

LINC is committed to connecting Idahoans with trusted resources that support independent living, and Adaptive Driving Idaho is an important part of that network. To learn more about adaptive driving services, hear Amber's podcast episode, and explore additional resources, visit LINC's Driver Training Resource Page at [Driver Training](#).



Youth Corner: **Collaboration in Action!**

Last week, the LINC crew teamed up with participants from

Last week, the LINC crew teamed up with participants from the Vista VIEW ICBVI Summer Youth Camp for a special recording of [*A Little Bird Told Me*](#)!

Our host, Kat Southwick, sat down with the campers for a conversation about their interests, experiences, and what it's like navigating the world as young people with visual impairments. Their perspectives were thoughtful, authentic, and inspiring.

Here's a look behind the scenes from the recording session! Keep an eye on our page—we'll share the Spotify link as soon as the episode is live.

Mark Your Calendars!

Please click on the event title for more information.

Aug 4 - [Wheel Fix It On the Go](#), 10:00am-2:00pm
(Caldwell)

Aug 6 - [Register to Vote](#), 12:00pm MT/11:00am PT (Zoom)

Aug 7 - [GGG: Games and Outdoor Movie at Dusk](#),
7:30pm-12:00am (Twin Falls)

Aug 14 - Youth [Vintage Movie Night](#), 7:00pm-10:00pm
(Boise)

Sept 1 - [GGG: Train Club](#), 5:00pm (Twin Falls)

Don't see an event you're looking for? We're always adding new workshops, advocacy opportunities, community events, and trainings. Visit our website's [Event Calendar](#) and follow LINC on social media for the latest updates—you never know what might be added next!



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