

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Hilton Garden Inn, Grand Forks & Virtual
May 7-8, 2026**

Call to Order

Warren Granfor called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call

Members Present: Scott Burlingame, Leon Dietrich, Peter Yung, McKenna Thrush, Robyn Soiseth, Chelsy Sondrol, Warren Granfor, Joe Yasenchack, Angie Bosch, Shannon Bozovosky

Members Absent: Ali Brown, Brittney Hogan, Gillian Plenty Chief, Ben Wolf Necklace

Non-Council Members Present: Aimee Volk, Randy Sorensen, Darrel Hannum, Kianna Roecker, Royce Schultze

Approval of the May 2026 Agenda

Scott Burlingame made a motion to amend the agenda and add Senator Jeff Barta to May 7th around 3:00 pm, Lisa Hermosillo seconded the motion. Leon Dietrich made a motion to accept the amended agenda, Robyn Soiseth seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Approval of February 2026 Minutes

Lisa Hermosillo made a motion to approve the February 2026 SILC minutes as presented, Peter Yung seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Correspondence – Brittney Hogan

We completed the Triennial Needs Assessment Survey for the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) and we will have a presentation on the results at the August SILC meeting.

Treasurer's Report – Peter Yung

Reviewed the Treasurer's Report.

Scott Burlingame made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, McKenna Thrush seconded the motion to approve. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

North Dakota School for the Deaf - Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing – Kristen Vetter

North Dakota School for the Deaf – Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing serves all ages. They serve about 20-30 students in the school.

The adult outreach team provides services throughout North Dakota, at no charge, to adults who are losing their hearing with aging. They work with highway patrol to do outreach on a traffic stop and incarceration. They just added first responders training (EMTs, Firefighters, etc.).

Representative Frelich District 15 (Devils Lake) is a team member of the adult outreach for the School for the Deaf House Bill 1097 passed in the 2025 legislation. This was to study the accessibility of state and local services for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have hearing differences.

They had had three meetings and there are two more meeting that are expected. The committee has decided to expand the scope of the study to include accommodations for vision loss.

They have identified several concerns: lack of licensed interpreters, inconsistent use of technology to provide effective communication, lack of knowledge, resources are not fully utilized, local services are not available of accommodations or how to use them, and ND is one of three states with no mandated hearing screening or reporting standards.

Senators Updates – Senator Jeff Barta, District 43 in Grand Forks

Rural Health Transformation Plan Roadshow session was most recently completed in Devils Lake. How to utilize the funds. There will be other sessions done throughout the state. There are four pillars of the Rural Health Transformation Program to provide funding.

1. Workforce development in rural healthcare (\$45.5 million).
2. Modern technology (\$33.9 million).
3. Bring high quality care closer to home (\$101.4 million).
4. Making ND healthy again (\$19.2 million).

He recommended that for building a stronger connection with legislators the SILC should do research on as many as they can. Having a point of contact, engaging, reaching out, and writing a letter so it stands out. Having a simple brochure resonates well with them. Showing them the impact of the services we provide (return on investment) is also beneficial.

North Dakota Development Fund is for businesses and they recently added a clause for towns that have 5,000 people or less that there is no sector that the business has to be part of.

ND Vision Services School for the Blind – Ken Dockter

He talked about the start of the ND Vision Services School for the Blind (NDVS/SB) location, name, etc. They have been in Grand Forks since 1961. They have adapted their delivery model over time. They used to be a residential school. Now they are an outreach delivery model. In 1995 they started a short-term programming that is typically there for a week. They provide a lot of daily living skills training so individuals who are blind or low vision learn how to be independent. They serve all ages of individuals. They were the first state to do short term programming in the nation.

He shared assistive technology, apps, iPhone accessibility, etc.

Home and Community Based Services for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities – Brittney Hogan

Cancelled.

Friday, May 8, 2026

Call to Order

Warren Granfor called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call

Members Present: Scott Burlingame, Leon Dietrich, McKenna Thrush, Peter Yung, Chelsy Sondrol, Ali Brown, Lisa Hermosillo, Shannon Bozovsky, Robyn Soiseth, Angie Bosch

Members Absent: Brittney Hogan, Gillian Plenty Chief, Ben Wolf Necklace, Joe Yasenchack

Non-Committee Members: Aimee Volk, Randy Sorensen, Royce Schultze, Kianna Roecker

Quarterly Director's Report:

Angie for Freedom: No report.

Royce for Dakota Center for Independent Living: See attached.

Scott for Independence, Inc.: See attached.

Randy for Options: See attached.

Behavioral Health Update – Pam Sagness

She went through the statistics in North Dakota. Substance Use disorder and any mental illness. Drug overdose deaths have declined over the past years. They are working on awareness of fentanyl as those numbers have been on the incline. Prevention works especially in youth alcohol use as those are declining.

For the last 15 years they have worked on the continuum of care for behavioral health. The pillars are promotion, prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

She talked about the Behavioral Health Strategic Plan, dashboard, and their three key priorities (supporting the full continuum of care, increasing community-based services, and preventing criminal justice involvement for individuals with a behavioral health condition).

Accomplishments from the 2023 session: jail tele-psychiatry, behavioral health school grant, suicide fatality review commission, virtual behavioral health crisis care expansion (Avel eCare), new state hospital planning, and opioid settlement funding. They now have a behavioral health navigator.

For 2025 legislative session they have begun building the state hospital. The hospital is projected to be completed in late 2027 and move in early 2028. They were also instructed to review options and develop a plan to establish long-term structured residences which they are working on.

The Substance Use Disorder (SUD) voucher is specific to ND. There have been over 11,000 vouchers issued.

Recovery Housing Assistance Program (RHAP) which offers a supportive living environment for people in recovery for up to 12 weeks. There is a waiting list for this program at this time.

Committee Reports

Governance Committee – Royce Schultze: There is one opening in quadrant two. March 31, 2027, first terms ending, Warren Granfor and Shannon Bozovsky. Unexpired terms, Brittney Hogan, and Ben Wolf Necklace. Angie Bosch will be terming out March 31, 2027.

Internal Affairs – Chelsy Sondrol: Reported on the GRID. They have drafted a Presenter Follow up Survey that they will send out to Ken Dockter and Kristen Vetter for feedback. They will report back at the next meeting. They talked about signing up to be a member of NCIL again and sending people to NCIL conference on July 20-23, 2026.

Robyn Soiseth made a motion for the ND SILC to join NCIL membership and Lisa Hermosillo seconded the motion. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

Leon made a motion to send two SILC Members and Lisa Hermosillo seconded the motion. Scott had discussion that the Governance committee would meet to decide on who to send. Scott made a motion to accept the above motion, and Robyn Soiseth seconded the motion. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

External Affairs – Angie Bosch: Reported on the GRID.

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) – Robyn Soiseth

They had a special meeting in February to go over the Unified State Plan and they went over goals and objectives. In April they had their quarterly meetings and there were two that had the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) reports. VR IT Systems Administrator updated on technology that they are working on. Rehab Services, Inc. (RSI) did a presentation on benefits planning.

Committee on Aging – Royce Schultze

No report.

Olmstead Commission – Scott Burlingame

No longer on the Olmstead Commission.

NASILC

No report.

Public Comment

No comment.

The next SILC meeting will be on August 6-7, 2026, in Minot, ND, and will have the virtual option.

Robyn Soiseth made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Peter Yung seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Dakota Center for Independent Living, May 2026 Director's Report

Nine transitions and 23 diversions.

The Dickinson office has been temporarily closed until new staff can be hired.

Community Education and Outreach

Staff are part of the planning committee for the Olmstead Conference on July 20th at the Bismarck State College National Energy Center of Excellence. Attended the Standing Rock Career Fair and provided information to students who might be interested in a career in our field. Staff set up a booth at the Midwest Murder Live Podcast hosted by McLean Family Resource Center. Staff set up a booth at the North Dakota Aging Symposium and presented on agency services at the Operation Roundup with Capital Electric. We also received a \$ 2,500 donation from Capital Electric.

Community and Systems Advocacy

Contacted the Bismarck Public Works Department about snow removal on curbs, which prohibits anyone with a band that has a lift or ramp from using on street parking, and this includes anyone with a mobility device.

Success Stories

A consumer's bathroom modification was completed. This consumer was very happy with the new walk-in shower. She lives alone, and the new walk-in shower will increase her independence and help her be safe in her home.

Staff assisted a consumer in appealing their Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) denial, and the appeal was approved. They are now receiving Social Security and were awarded about a year's worth of back pay.

Dakota CIL (DCIL) was a payee for a consumer who was receiving SSDI and Veterans Administration (VA) benefits. This individual was approved by Social Security Administration (SSA) to manage her SSDI a number of years ago, but the VA determined she still needed a payee for her benefits. After an interview with her and DCIL, VA determined she could take over her benefits as of May 1st.

Independence, Inc. Director's Report – May 7, 2026 – Scott Burlingame, Executive Director

Individual Services

Successes

A man worked with Independence, Inc. to achieve a major personal goal of obtaining his driver's license. Throughout services, staff provided support by reviewing the North Dakota driver's license manual, practicing test materials, and completing quizzes to help build his knowledge and confidence. Despite barriers related to his disability that made the process more challenging, he remained determined and motivated to succeed.

Through consistent effort and engagement, he successfully obtained his North Dakota driver's license. He also took an important step toward greater independence by purchasing his own vehicle, significantly increasing his mobility and ability to access the community.

After achieving his goals, he successfully completed services at Independence, Inc. His accomplishments reflect his hard work, perseverance, and commitment to building a more independent future.

An individual requested information about a local resource where individuals could borrow medical equipment, such as a shower chair. Staff provided a referral to NDAD and confirmed the location details for the caller. Follow-up contact was later made, and the caller reported that she was able to find the equipment she needed and expressed appreciation for the assistance and support provided.

During a discussion about lessons and skills learned through services at Independence, Inc., a student shared that staff helped him learn how to request accommodations and feel more comfortable talking about his disability. Through education and support, he gained greater self-advocacy skills and increased confidence in communicating his needs in different settings.

A woman was living in an unsafe situation with her boyfriend, and tensions in the home were escalating to the point where she feared the situation could become physical. After being referred to Independence, Inc., staff worked quickly to help her transition to safety, and she was able to move out within one week. Independence, Inc. assisted with the moving process and helped her obtain furniture and household items for her new apartment. She shared that the support made a tremendous difference during an extremely stressful and uncertain time, and that having guidance through every step of the process helped her feel safe, supported, and hopeful about the future.

A woman struggling with addiction entered services at Independence, Inc. feeling guarded, isolated, and unsure who she could trust. She began working closely with staff who provided patient, consistent support focused on understanding, stability, and recovery. Over time, she became more engaged in services and started taking meaningful steps toward rebuilding her life.

A major turning point in her recovery was entering treatment, where she faced challenges she had avoided for years. Through treatment and ongoing support from Independence, Inc., she developed healthier coping skills, gained insight into her behaviors, and built a stronger sense of self-worth. One of her greatest motivations throughout the process was rebuilding her relationship with her children. She became committed to being more present, accountable, and dependable, understanding that trust would take time and consistency to restore.

After successfully completing treatment, she transitioned into sober living, where she continued strengthening her independence while remaining grounded in recovery. During this time, she completed probation and graduated from treatment, both significant milestones in her journey. She is now preparing to transition out of sober living and is pursuing employment in the recovery field so she can support others facing similar challenges. Through determination, resilience, and dedication to her family, she is building a stable and meaningful future.

A man experiencing homelessness and living with significant mobility challenges worked with Independence, Inc. to improve his quality of life and achieve greater independence. At the start of services, he was living in an environment that was not wheelchair accessible, making daily activities and meeting basic needs extremely difficult.

Independence, Inc. worked closely with him to address these barriers through advocacy, coordination of services, and ongoing peer support. Through these efforts, he was able to move into a safe, stable, and wheelchair-accessible apartment of his own. This transition greatly improved his independence and ability to manage daily living activities.

In addition to securing stable housing, he became connected to multiple community resources, including Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), which provide daily in-home support. These services have helped him maintain his living space, manage personal care needs, and improve his overall well-being.

Throughout services, he also demonstrated meaningful personal growth by becoming more open to accepting help and engaging consistently with peer support. With ongoing support, community resources, and his own determination, he continues making progress toward a more stable and successful future with an improved quality of life.

A 17-year-old woman worked with Independence, Inc. to prepare for her driver's permit test. Staff provided support through four weeks of dedicated study and practice to help build her knowledge and confidence. After consistent effort and preparation, she shared that she felt comfortable and ready to take the test, demonstrating increased confidence in her abilities and progress toward greater independence.

Barriers

A 76-year-old woman was in need of a social security card and her id however did not have support from her family or the social worker in the nursing home. Independence, Inc. advocated and made the phone calls with the woman to get appointments to get the id. Independence, Inc. assisted with filling out the applications and finding resources to assist with the needed funding.

This worker helped a consumer get back to her apartment. Some items were purchased to help her with her daily life, and she started receiving 24 hour care. Over the course of a few months, the consumer's health declined because she refused to do her exercises. She wanted to spend all day and night in her recliner. This made it impossible to properly clean her. She gained a significant amount of weight, to the point she fell and it took eight people to get her up and into bed safely. She ended up back in the hospital and back in the nursing home. HCBS had to back out because she could not be properly cared for in the state she is in, if she went home. Thus, MFP backed out until she gets herself to a place where she can be helped by one person in the home.

Community Services

Outreach

Independence, Inc. expanded its community outreach efforts to increase awareness of Independent Living services and connect with more people with disabilities throughout the region. Staff began conducting general outreach to dozens of local nonprofits, agencies, and community locations frequently accessed by people with disabilities, sharing information about the organization's core services and supports.

In addition, Independence, Inc. launched expanded communication efforts through email, text messaging, and social media campaigns designed to invite individuals to access services and learn more about available resources. The overall goal of these efforts is to reach more people with disabilities, strengthen community connections, and ensure individuals are aware of the supports available to help them live independently.

State Plan for Independent Living Outreach

Independence, Inc. partnered in outreach efforts to encourage participation in the development of North Dakota's next State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). Community members, including people with disabilities, past consumers, family members, friends, and service providers, were invited to complete statewide surveys designed to identify the most significant needs facing people with disabilities across North Dakota.

The outreach campaign emphasized the importance of community voice and participation in shaping the future of independent living services. Surveys were distributed through community networks, digital communication, and social media platforms to help ensure broad input from individuals and stakeholders throughout the state.

Community Inclusion and Engagement

We promoted affordable and accessible community participation opportunities by sharing information about local markets, live theater, community events, and other low-cost activities available throughout the area. Outreach efforts encouraged individuals, including people with disabilities, to explore their communities, connect with others, and participate in local events without significant financial barriers.

The campaign highlighted the importance of inclusive and affordable community experiences, emphasizing that everyone should have opportunities to engage socially, build connections, and enjoy what their community has to offer. Information was shared through social media and digital outreach to increase awareness and encourage participation.

Peer Support and Community Connection

Independence, Inc. promoted community engagement and peer support through the "Paint & Connect" Peer Support Group, an inclusive event designed to bring people together in a welcoming and creative environment. The event encouraged individuals to build connections, reduce isolation, and engage in positive social interaction through art and peer support activities.

The program was made possible through partnership with the Taube Museum of Art and its accessibility-focused programming. Outreach efforts included social media promotion, registration campaigns, and direct community engagement to encourage participation and ensure individuals were aware of available opportunities for connection and support.

Combating Apathy

Independence, Inc. continued its advocacy and outreach efforts focused on addressing the growing sense of apathy, discouragement and disengagement experienced by many people with disabilities. Messaging emphasized that while physical barriers remain important, some of the greatest challenges are the lowered expectations and feelings of hopelessness created by complicated systems and long-term barriers to full participation.

We have identified what I described as an “epidemic of apathy,” reflected in rising numbers of no-call or no-show appointments, disengagement from services, and the growing difficulty many individuals face in taking ownership of their goals, responsibilities, and opportunities for independence.

As a peer-led organization where many staff members live with disabilities themselves, Independence, Inc. highlighted the importance of empowerment, self-advocacy, and community connection. Outreach efforts encouraged individuals to remain engaged, challenge limitations, and participate in advocacy, education, ADA training, and community activities designed to build confidence, raise expectations, and promote independent living.

Start Up Minot Academy

Jamie Hardt, Program Director at Independence, Inc., recently completed the Start Up Minot Academy through the Minot Area Chamber EDC, a program focused on leadership, innovation, and strategic thinking. Also completing the academy was Brandon, an individual served by Independence, Inc., who shared that support from Independence, Inc., specifically meeting with staff member Allisen, was the driving force behind taking this next step. This opportunity highlights the impact of Independent Living services in building confidence, encouraging community involvement, and supporting individuals in pursuing personal goals.

Stop Giving, Start Serving

At Independence, Inc., we believe that how we serve people matters just as much as the services we provide. Our staff training focuses on helping employees move beyond simply “fixing problems” and instead building the skills, confidence, and independence of the people we serve. Every interaction is viewed as an opportunity to empower individuals to make their own choices, strengthen self-direction, and create long-term change rather than short-term dependence.

A major emphasis of our training is teaching staff to serve as coaches and partners rather than rescuers or decision-makers. Staff are trained to ask questions, help people think through options, and support informed decision-making instead of taking control of situations. This coaching mindset reflects the Independent Living philosophy of consumer control, equal access, and respect for individual choice. By focusing on collaboration and skill-building, we help people develop greater independence and confidence in navigating their own lives.

Our training also reinforces the importance of understanding professional roles and boundaries. Staff learn that our role is not to provide therapy or “save” people, but to guide, support, and connect individuals with the right resources when needed. Through ongoing self-assessment and coaching development, Independence, Inc. continues investing in staff growth so that services remain person-centered, empowering, and focused on long-term success for the people we serve.

Options IRCIL Director's Report – May 2026

Significant Events

A consumer with complex transition needs asking for assistance to move home from a nursing facility contacted the local Independent Living Center. The individual expressed a strong desire to return home; however, several critical supports needed to be established prior to discharge. In addition to securing Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Qualified Service Providers (QSPs) to meet the consumer's care needs, significant home accessibility modifications were required. These included removing the existing bathtub and installing a walk-in/roll-in shower to ensure safe bathing, as well as widening the bedroom doorway to accommodate the consumer's wheelchair and allow full access to the home. These modifications were essential for a safe and successful transition; however, the consumer did not have the financial means to cover the associated costs and was unable to independently locate contractors to complete the work. Through the combined support of HCBS, the Money Follows the Person Program grant, and the dedicated efforts of the Transition Coordinator from the Center, appropriate QSP providers were secured, funding for the necessary modifications was obtained, and the required work was completed. As a result of this coordinated and collaborative effort, the consumer successfully transitioned back into their home and is now able to live independently within the community.

In March 2026, the Center received a referral for an individual who was hospitalized and preparing for discharge. The individual, who is blind, faced significant barriers to independence after leaving an abusive situation, had no personal belongings beyond clothing. Within 24 hours of the referral, contact was established and the individual successfully transitioned into a safe apartment. Shortly after discharge, staff conducted an in-home visit to introduce themselves as well as develop goals that would ensure a successful diversion. Due to the urgency of the situation, a purchase request was quickly approved to secure essential furniture and household supplies. Within days, staff coordinated delivery and fully set up the apartment, ensuring a safe and functional living space. Ongoing collaboration with the individual's support team allowed additional needs to be identified and addressed promptly, including kitchen essentials and other household items. In addition to meeting immediate needs, staff supported long-term independence by connecting the individual to community resources, including a referral to the North Dakota School for the Blind. Follow-up visits and continued communication ensured that any remaining barriers were addressed.

In early January, staff submitted a grant request to Nodak Rural Electric Co-op through their Operation Round Up program on behalf of an individual living independently with his wife. He enjoys going to the store with her, but mobility challenges often make it difficult for him to get around, leaving him waiting in the vehicle during errands. His wife wondered if a lightweight power chair might help him stay involved and active during outings. Nodak Rural Electric Co-op generously approved funding for a power chair, along with a cushion and storage bag to support his comfort and needs. The chair was ordered and delivered, and the couple expressed deep gratitude. The new power chair has already made a meaningful difference, allowing him to join his wife in the store and making daily life easier for both of them.

Options was working with an individual whose mother entered a nursing home; his life changed overnight. The home they once shared was no longer an option, and he faced the uncertainty of living on his own for the first time-without her by his side. With support from Options staff, he did not have

to face this transition alone. Together with his power of attorney, our team helped him secure a housing voucher, organize and manage his finances, and complete the necessary asset spend-down to ensure Medicaid eligibility. Step by step, he began building stability and independence during an incredibly uncertain time. Just as he began to find his footing, he became seriously ill and spent eight weeks in the hospital. During his recovery, his brother brought him back to his hometown and helped him move into a nursing facility. In a moment of unexpected comfort, he now lives just across the hall from his mother! Something that has brought him deep peace during a difficult time. At this time, Options continues to support him by helping him to maintain his apartment while his long-term needs and recovery are assessed. This ensures that, should he regain the ability to live independently again, the opportunity will still be there. This story reflects the importance of consistent, consumer directed supports during times of crisis and transition. Even when circumstances change unexpectedly, maintaining stability, preserving choice, and prioritizing connection can make all the difference.

North Dakota introduced the Primary Residence Tax Credit, offering homeowners an important opportunity to reduce the burden of rising property taxes. When combined with the Homestead Property Tax Credit, eligible individuals can see meaningful financial relief-support that can make the difference between stability and financial crisis. Many of the individuals served by Options live on limited incomes and experience disabilities that already create significant barriers to financial stability. For them, navigating tax programs is not only confusing, but often out of reach without support. This year, Options staff stepped in to bridge that gap. The writer assisted several consumers in understanding eligibility, completing applications, and successfully accessing both credits! Small, targeted assistance like this helps preserve independence, dignity, and housing stability!

In January, this writer had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with Steve Volk, State President of North Dakota's VFW, after first reaching out the previous August. What began as a simple request for information turned into a meaningful connection and an unexpected moment of support. A veteran served by Options was invited to join the meeting. During the visit, Mr. Volk took time to listen and connect directly with him. In a powerful gesture of generosity, he wrote the veteran a \$1,000 check to use for his personal needs! He then asked if the veteran was a member of the North Dakota VFW. When he shared that he was not, Mr. Volk encouraged him to join and personally covered his \$45 membership dues. In a single meeting, this veteran experienced both practical support and something just as important-recognition, respect, and belonging!

In March 2026, while attending a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Conference in Fargo, an exciting opportunity emerged that highlighted the power of collaboration and the growing need for support services in rural communities. During the conference, the Devils Lake Independent Living Specialist re-connected with Nikki, a TBI specialist with the ND Brain Injury Network. Recognizing the need for continued support in Devils Lake, Nikki approached the Devils Lake Independent Living Specialist about co-facilitating an already established TBI support group in the community. As part of Options, this presented a valuable opportunity to collaborate and expand the reach of independent living services. This collaboration represents a strong example of organizations working together to build on existing services rather than duplicating efforts. By combining expertise and resources, this effort helps ensure that individuals living with TBI in Devils Lake have access to consistent, meaningful support.

A consumer came in after incurring a disability through a farming accident. Due to his disability he could no longer get around the farm so he came to request help in securing an electric mobility device. The Center takes donations and recycles the donations to people in need. At the time of his inquiry the Center had a Scooter available and that was given to him enabling him to get to and from his truck. He was so happy and grateful that he couldn't find the words to express his feelings. The smile on his face was a reward in itself.

Community Education and Outreach

Reached out to the Owner of a local Medical Transportation Provider to inform him of the need for a provider to take Medicaid Expansion reimbursement.

Provided the ND School for the Blind the ability to bring students interested in Human Services to our Office to interview staff or shadow staff so they could learn about Independent Living as a vocation.

Attended the Grand Forks Emergency Planning Meetings to advocate for the inclusion of people with disabilities in their planning efforts.

Provided the Harvey Self Advocacy Group instruction on how to advocate for themselves and in order to make community changes.

Assisted a person to advocate for a local restaurant to add low tables within their bar area by writing a letter informing the establishment of their obligation.

As part of a Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement related to a Housing Discrimination Court Case that was found in favor of the Plaintiff, Options continues to evaluate apartment complexes and remodeled units to ensure they fulfill the courts direction for accessibility code errors and omissions.

Options and Freedom met with the State of North Dakota DD Services representative to discuss problems with eligibility for people who do not have IQs below 70 and our troubles with people being determined eligible.

Set up a booth at the Forx Home Builders Association, Builders and Trade Show providing the public with information on Universal Design and Aging in Place materials.

Set up a booth at the University of North Dakota's Student Union to raise the awareness of the students about Options services and also Recreational Equipment people with disabilities can use to access the outdoors and recreate.

Changes Achieved

A local medical transportation provider expanded their public reimburses so they could provide service for people on Medicaid Expansion.

A student from the School for the Blind interviewed staff fulfilling differing roles to learn about the types of jobs available at a Center and later sent Options a thank you note highlighting all she learned.

A student with a visual impairment from the School for the Blind shadowed Options' CAD Draftsperson learning about CAD Drafting and the technology needed to accommodate his disability.

Emergency Management of Grand Forks will include recommendations to insure their public notices are in various formats and that procedures include that incorporate the needs of people with various disabilities when disaster strikes.

Ten persons are better prepared to advocate for themselves and for community changes.

A local restaurant added a low table to their bar area in conformance to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Options completed Fair Housing Act access evaluations of fifteen apartments found in three complexes that show the owner has fulfilled a Court Order requiring the units to be updated, raising the number of units that can be used by people with disabilities in Grand Forks and Fargo.

Fifty-two people interacted with staff who were providing information at the Home Builders and Trade Show on Aging in place and Universal Design. Information on a highly used bathroom design called "wet bathrooms" were provided to people this design is more compatible with smaller bathrooms.

Seventeen students stopped by Options booth to learn more about recreation and adaptive equipment people with disabilities can use to recreate with.

Direct Service

- Housing Modifications – 5 (2.16%)
- Independent Living Skills – 188 (81.39%)
- Individual Advancement – 218 (94.37%)
- Peer Support – 44 – (19.05%)
- Group - 20- (8.66%)
- Transition – 2 (.87%)
- Travel – 175 (75.76%)

Age

- Under Five – 1 (.43%)
- Five to 20 – 11 (4.76%)
- 20-25 – 14 (6.06%)
- 26-60 – 95 – (41.13%)
- Over 60 – 110 (47.62%)

Disability

- Cognitive – 50 (21.65%)
- Mental – 34 (14.72%)
- Physical – 142 (61.47%)
- Sensory – 5 (2.16%)