

**Statewide Independent Living Council of Hawai'i
Quarterly Meeting Minutes [Approved]**

Date: June 4, 2026

Time: Approx. 10:15 AM – 12:38 PM (meeting adjourned early due to loss of internet connectivity)

Location (In Person): Hawai'i Island – West Hawai'i Civic Center, Kailua-Kona

Location (Zoom): Hybrid videoconference

Call to Order

Philip Ana, Vice Chair, welcomed attendees to the June quarterly meeting of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and thanked everyone for joining. The start was delayed by technical difficulties connecting the in-room laptop to the display and audio; the meeting proceeded in a hybrid format with American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation provided on Zoom.

Roll Call / Attendance – Donald Sakamoto

SILC Members Present:

- Philip Ana (Vice Chair) – presiding - in person
- Lea Dias (Designated State Entity, ex-officio) – represented by Cheryl Matthews (Hawai'i Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, DVR)
- Judy Guajardo (Executive Committee Member, at-large)
- Brian Hauser
- Valerie Janikowski (joined late)
- Vickie Kennedy - in person
- Donald Sakamoto (Secretary)
- Annette Tashiro (Treasurer) – in person
- Nani Watanabe - in person
- Leticia Zuno (joined late)

SILC Members Absent:

- Patrick Gartside (Chair) – excused
- Catia Garell – excused

Staff:

- Amanda Lowe, Executive Director - in person

Guests / Presenters:

- Kaitlyn Brennan – Director, The Arc of Kona
- Jen Brazee – Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC)
- Alice Braden – Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), Kona office
- Julia Altoff – Program Specialist, Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council (Hawai'i Island)
- Kim Roth – Supporting Strategies (SILC bookkeeping)
- Meghan Miller – Director, Center on Disability Studies (CDS), University of Hawai'i (UH) at Mānoa
- Lehua Chang – Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH); incoming board member
- Matthew Brown – Manager, Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (statewide)
- Cheryl Matthews – Hawai'i Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- John Nishida – United Cerebral Palsy
- Christine Pagano – Interim Executive Director, Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB)
- Roxanne Untalan Bolden – Executive Director, Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH)
- Letty Zuno – Access to Independence
- Louis Erteschik – Director, Hawaii Disability Rights Center (HDRC)
- Ben Foster – Administrative Manager, HDRC
- Maurice Messina – Chief Operating Officer, Vibrant Hawaii
- Kauai Fukuda – County Executive, Hawai'i County Office of Aging / ADRC
- Roy Corpus – Self-advocate; Chair, West Hawai'i Self-Advocate Advisory Council
- Regina Sapko and Keri – ASL Interpreters

Quorum established.

Independent Living Philosophy

By consensus, the review of the Independent Living Philosophy (agenda Item 3) was deferred so the agenda could accommodate presenters with limited availability.

Approval of Agenda

The Chair noted that several presenters had adjusted availability, so the order of reports would be flexible.

Motion: Annette Tashiro moved to accept the agenda as presented.

Second: Donald Sakamoto seconded the motion

Result: Approved by voice vote.

Approval of Minutes – May 7, 2026

Donald Sakamoto and Annette Tashiro had reviewed the May 7, 2026 minutes; the Chair reported no corrections.

Motion: Donald Sakamoto moved to approve the May 7, 2026 minutes as presented.

Second: Annette Tashiro seconded the motion

Result: Approved by voice vote.

SILC Financial Report – Second Quarter, Fiscal Year 2026 (January–March 2026) – Kim Roth, Supporting Strategies

Kim Roth, who works with Executive Director Amanda Lowe, the Chair Patrick Gartside, and Treasurer Annette Tashiro on the council's books, presented a second-quarter financial snapshot (January–March 2026):

- Income is effectively flat: a quarterly invoice is recognized in equal portions across the three months of the quarter.
- Most costs are fixed; variation appears mainly in general and administrative expenses (e.g., facility/meeting-room rental and travel for conferences).
- Overall the council is in a healthy position — spending does not exceed the incoming funds and the council is close to breaking even each month, indicating a good use of their resources.

The report had been distributed with the agenda and meeting materials. Members were invited to send follow-up questions to Amanda Lowe, who will forward them to Kim Roth. The Chair and Amanda thanked Kim and her team for their work.

Centers for Independent Living & Community Partner Reports

To accommodate presenter schedules, reports were taken out of the printed order.

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) – Roxanne Untalan Bolden, Executive Director

Roxanne submitted a written report and highlighted key items (she noted difficulty hearing in-room speakers due to laptop-microphone distance):

- Legislative session: the team tracked 131+ measures affecting people with disabilities and submitted approximately 175 pieces of written testimony, focusing on systemic themes that advance the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).
- Most significant advancement: the Legislature passed a measure creating a disability integration specialist position within the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HiEMA); it cleared both chambers and is now with the Governor. The position would build the needs of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into all phases of emergency management (preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation).
- Community living / Olmstead: tracked and supported measures expanding Medicaid home- and community-based services and protecting the right to choose community living over institutional placement, in coordination with the relevant state advisory council and HDRC; raised concerns about consumer autonomy, due process, and informed consent in assisted-community-treatment measures.
- Pursuing a cross-disability seat on the State 911 Board's advisory committee as 911 moves toward artificial-intelligence (AI)-assisted systems and a statewide emergency health profile, to ensure tools work for people with communication, cognitive, and sensory disabilities.
- Opened new advocacy after the Department of Education moved to cut reimbursement rates for behavior technicians serving autistic students and students with related disabilities — framed as a cross-disability and integration concern that hits neighbor-island providers hardest; will monitor the Board of Education.
- After the spring Kona Low storms, developed a consumer-needs survey and field-observation forms so IL specialists can capture what disabled survivors experience and feed it into accessible recovery.
- In partnership with Access to Independence, AILH will receive Ford Foundation funding to assist disaster-affected consumers across the islands.
- Civic participation: continuing the three-year Access to Democracy initiative with the League of Women Voters; advanced a dual-modality voting position (accessible vote-by-mail plus strong in-person voter service centers); seeking individuals to serve seats on election-accessibility needs advisory committees at the state and county levels.

- County level: sent Kaua'i County a letter regarding elevator accessibility and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II program-access obligations (received a constructive initial response); submitted support for reinstating Honolulu's Mayor's Advisory Committee on Disabilities.
- Federal: communicated with Hawai'i's congressional delegation, including Senator Schatz, on the 21st Century Road to Housing Act (disaster recovery and rural rental assistance); will monitor it through the U.S. House.

Discussion: The Chair praised the cross-disability emergency-management position; Roxanne explained current HiEMA representation is not cross-disability. She is still monitoring the bill's status and will keep the council updated. The Chair offered SILC's assistance, including testimony, if needed. Cheryl Matthews (DVR) thanked Roxanne's team, and Judy Guajardo's organization, for following up on a consumer concern she had raised.

Center on Disability Studies (CDS) / Hawai'i University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) – Meghan Miller, Director

- CDS at UH Mānoa is home to the Hawai'i UCEDD, one of 68 nationally (at least one per state). UCEDDs are federally funded centers for disability research, training, and services, with four core functions: interdisciplinary training, community service, research and evaluation, and information dissemination. CDS works with its tri-agency partners, the DD Council and HDRC.
- Since Miller became Director in January (the center's first permanent director in about six years), CDS has begun a five-year strategic planning process.
- CDS is closely monitoring the federal funding landscape. The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) issued a statement responding to the President's budget, which again proposes to cut UCEDDs; CDS hopes Congress rejects the cuts as it did last year.
- CDS's Community Advisory Council — including people with disabilities, family members, and community-agency representatives — meets quarterly and is currently recruiting about four new members (link shared in the chat).
- Recent activities: DD Day at the Capitol; a co-sponsored film screening with the Honolulu Museum of Art / Doris Duke Theatre; and the Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability (PacRim) conference held the prior Thursday and Friday.

Discussion: The Chair offered to refer interested council members to the CDS advisory council. Donald Sakamoto asked about coordination with the congressional delegation on federal funding; Miller said communication has historically been strong and CDS is awaiting AUCD guidance on outreach timing (expected over the summer). She noted that the Native Hawaiian education program-project funding call has not been issued and likely will not be for the coming fiscal year; Senator Schatz's office is aware and exploring state-level options.

Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) – Christine Pagano, Interim Executive Director (via interpreter)

Legislative update for the 2026 (33rd) Legislative Session:

- DCAB took positions on roughly 63 bills/resolutions and submitted approximately 117 written testimonies and 27 oral testimonies. (Figures should be verified.)
- On May 28, the Governor signed House Bill (HB) 469, House Draft 2 / Senate Draft 2, relating to disability parking, enacted as Act 054, allowing DCAB to issue a disability travel placard to people with a validated placard or a disability parking identification / exemption permit.
- On May 28, the Governor signed Senate Bill (SB) 2727, House Draft 1 / Conference Draft 1, relating to discrimination, enacted as Act 056, concerning the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission and extending the timeframe to file a complaint to one year.
- DCAB is working with the Legislature on a healthcare study addressing communication needs of people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind; the report is due at the end of the year.
- ADA coordination: DCAB partnered with the Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) to co-publish the Hawai'i Electronic Information Technology Disability and Access Standards (April 21). The materials explain the U.S. Department of Justice Title II rule extending state/local government web-content and mobile-app accessibility compliance from April 2026 to April 2027.
- DCAB updated Governor's Directive No. 26-01 (effective May 5, 2026), aligning with the Title II compliance timeline (extended to April 2027).
- Training: DCAB partnered with the U.S. Access Board to offer a free two-day Disability Access Conference on June 25–26, 8:00–11:30 AM (information shared in the chat).

Christine departed for a conflicting 11:00 meeting.

Hawaii Disability Rights Center (HDRC) – Louis Erteschik, Director

- Earlier funding uncertainty has been resolved; following a bureaucratic backlog, HDRC received all funds and is fully operational. HDRC continued its outreach, including DD Day at the Capitol and the PacRim conference.
- Legislative highlights, all tied to community integration: HB 2443 establishes a full-time coordinator within the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency to address disability-community needs in emergencies; SB 2268 (universal changing stations) will require a number of adult changing stations in public buildings and public accommodations going forward; and SB 2340 removes the exclusion preventing people with developmental disabilities from living in certain care homes.
- The care-home bill passed readily, while the universal changing stations and disaster-management bills went down to the final day. HDRC coordinated to get the changing-station

bill scheduled in conference and resolved House concerns; on the disaster-management bill, advocates met with the Ways and Means vice chair to preserve roughly \$100,000 in funding. Both passed.

- Louis also noted a dyslexia-screening bill and a Braille-instruction bill.

Discussion: Roy Corpus, a self-advocate who testified on the changing-table bill, asked (via the Chair) to confirm the bill passed and awaits the Governor's signature; Louis confirmed it passed and emphasized its community-integration benefit. Julia Altoff (DD Council) added her thanks.

HDRC / SILC Joint Grant – Ben Foster, Administrative Manager, HDRC

- HDRC and SILC (Ben Foster and Amanda Lowe) collaborated on an application to the Borealis Philanthropy Foundation's Disability Inclusion Fund — Collaborative Grant Program, supported by the President's Council on Disability Inclusion and Philanthropy, which resources cross-movement collaborations advancing disability justice.
- The application was submitted about a month ago; a decision is expected in November. The award would be approximately \$75,000 per year for two years, shared between the two organizations.
- The project is a two-year statewide convening and community-led power-mapping effort: Phase 1 (first 6 months) includes at least one statewide gathering and outreach to disabled Kānaka Maoli community members and Native Hawaiian-serving organizations; Phase 2 (months 6–18) takes community gatherings island by island, supporting the SILC council on the neighbor islands; Phase 3 (project end) documents relationships and infrastructure and creates a toolkit. Materials will be released in plain language, ASL video, audio, and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (including community television).

Amanda noted she and Ben drafted the application in about 48 hours and looks forward to continuing the HDRC–SILC partnership. Nani Watanabe commended the neighbor-island focus.

Access to Independence – Letty Zuno (joined late)

Quarter 2 report:

- Served 88 new consumers and provided 108 hours of community services across the island.
- Saw a significant increase in requests for assistance in March and April following severe weather and flooding, with consumers experiencing disruptions to homes, belongings, medical supplies, documentation (including replacing vital records lost to flooding), and assistive technology.
- Mobilized direct support and advocacy — distributing cleaning supplies for flood-impacted homes and, in the last week, completing a project to repair a flood-damaged, corroded pipe in a consumer's home (working with the family and a local contractor).

- Continuing flood-recovery support with AILH and working with the Ford Foundation on approved funding to assist individuals with disabilities and their families across the islands.
- Referral invitation: anyone affected by the flooding may be referred; the only requirement is that someone in the household is a person with a disability. Contact Letty directly or submit a referral form on the agency website.

Amanda congratulated Access to Independence and AILH on the Ford Foundation funding and noted her regular, collaborative meetings with both directors.

[Recess — approximately 11:13 AM to 11:23 AM]

DD Council / West Hawai'i Update – Julia Altoff, with Roy Corpus (Self-Advocate Advisory Council)

- Julia welcomed the council to Hawai'i Island and introduced Roy Corpus, Chair of the West Hawai'i Self-Advocate Advisory Council (SAC), which has been working on voter-registration activities and preparing for an upcoming forum.
- DD Council West Hawai'i Legislative Forum: July 13, 11:00–2:00, location to be determined, in partnership with the Office of Aging; most legislators have confirmed.
- The DD Council is submitting its five-year State Plan in August. Public-comment meetings will be held on each island; the two Hawai'i Island sessions are June 19 (1:00–3:00, West Hawai'i Civic Center, Hale G, Kona) and June 26 (1:00–3:00, Aging and Disability Resource Center, Hilo), with public comment at 3:00. These are paired with Dr. Fernandez's early-dementia-detection screening training for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Discussion: Donald Sakamoto described Honolulu's Mayor's county elections-accessibility advisory needs committee (each county is mandated to seat five members) and the secure online ballot-return option used by blind voters on O'ahu, and asked about Hawai'i County voting access. Julia noted the statute lacks an enforcement mechanism and that Hawai'i County's committee has lapsed (recently showing nine openings and zero members) following the change in mayor, but praised the Office of Elections' responsiveness to individual voters. Donald offered to share the statewide elections-accessibility committee's meeting agendas and Zoom information so Hawai'i Island residents can give feedback. He also recalled a 2015 mobility-management study (with Philip Ana - Executive Office of Aging) and related neighbor-island accessible-transportation legislation that has repeatedly failed to pass.

Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) – Jen Brazee

- Through FODAC (Friends of Disabled Adults and Children, based in Georgia) and its disaster-relief team, ATRC received donations for Kona Low survivors: 8 wheelchairs and 3 communication iPads. Two iPads and one wheelchair have been distributed; remaining items are available by referral.

- Fiscal-year-to-date activity: 106 device-loan-library loans; 92 demonstrations; 115 items distributed through the reuse program (largely durable medical equipment — wheelchairs, walkers, rollators).
- ATRC launched a low-tech 3D-printed device program and has given out 136 printed items since January.

Discussion: Nani Watanabe praised ATRC's 3D-printed devices and is coordinating Jen's visit to Maui to meet the Deaf community and the Maui Wheelers. Members discussed fire-department smoke alarms (free units are offered, but flashing-light alarms for Deaf residents must be purchased, and ceiling-mounted alarms are difficult for wheelchair users to silence). Valerie Janikowski shared the value of 3D-printed signature guides and a bottle-opener device for her adopted daughter (who has amniotic banding syndrome). Donald thanked ATRC for participating in a recent Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Fair on May 2, and asked about signature-stamp or electronic-signature options for blind individuals; Jen will look into it.

Vibrant Hawaii – Maurice Messina, Chief Operating Officer

- Community Resilience Hubs: begun in 2019 during the pandemic and expanded to community resilience hubs around 2024 (13 active), now roughly 32 active across Hawai'i Island and the Ko'olau region. Hubs are equipped with generators, solar generators paired with Starlink, annual training, and shelter kits (cots, water, first aid); they activate during severe weather as a communication conduit with emergency management and conduct community damage assessments. About 50 partner agencies assist, often at no cost.
- Vibrant holds an annual Resilience Hub Summit (~100 leaders) and supports freeze-drying cohorts (two on Hawai'i Island, one on O'ahu) with about \$7,000 of equipment each to produce culturally appropriate emergency meals; one Kona school freeze-dries leftovers for students to take home. This year the gathering becomes a two-day in-person learning experience at UH Hilo on June 12–13 (~300 attendees).
- Points of distribution during the Kona Low (power out up to about two weeks): Vibrant mobilized within 24 hours, beginning in Volcano (large kūpuna population; refrigerated-medication needs), partnering with 'Ali'i Ice, Conan's Trucking, local water companies, Costco (water), and the Food Basket; ran a Pahoa Park site for about three days, then Hawaiian Acres; and, after Konawaena High School's closure affected hundreds of daily meals, ran two large distributions at the Honoka'a rodeo arena staffed by school sports teams, with Salvation Army providing \$100 KTA Super Stores gift cards.
- Kaukau for Keiki: a summer food program for children ages 1–18 that fed roughly 4,000–5,000 children per week last year and is doubling capacity to about 10,000 per week over six weeks this summer, with 32 participating communities; the first distribution is June 15. The program is about 95%

volunteer-driven (~500 volunteers/year), USDA-funded, with ADA reasonable accommodations made at sites.

Discussion: Donald Sakamoto noted the storage and weight advantages of freeze-dried food. The Chair raised kūpuna meal-preference concerns (congregate meals are not always culturally appropriate, citing a Molokaʻi farm-to-table example). Donald asked whether drones could deliver food or medication to cut-off rural areas; Maurice said Vibrant currently works through communities to find local help and escalates needs up to the state when necessary. Julia Altoff asked about Vibrant's community-navigator positions; the two-year grant is ending and the program will sunset as funding lapses. Julia offered to help with volunteer grant writing.

Hawaiʻi County Office of Aging / Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) – Kauai Fukuda, County Executive

- The office serves Hawaiʻi County kūpuna, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers as the designated Area Agency on Aging under the Older Americans Act. The ADRC functions as a one-stop, single source of information connecting people to services through referrals and applications.
- Core services include congregate and home-delivered meals (through the Hawaiʻi County Nutrition Program under Parks and Recreation); in-home care (personal care, chore services, homemaker support, and home modifications) through the Kupuna Care / component-care program; caregiver respite, counseling, and training; and adult day care through Hawaiʻi Island Adult Care.
- Eligibility is shaped by federal and state funding criteria, prioritizing those 60 and older with the greatest economic and social need; serving people under 60 can be a challenge, and staff work to connect them to other programs.
- Process: first contact (walk-in or phone) → options counseling / needs assessment → guidance (referrals and applications, e.g., the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP) → connection (case management).
- The four-year State Area Plan survey is in its distribution phase (goal of 500 responses; about 340 received). Kauai will send the survey link to Amanda for distribution to council members and welcomes invitations to table at community events.
- Initiatives include improving meal satisfaction, farm-to-table sustainability (in light of SNAP concerns), nutrition-education classes, adding meal vendors, and moving toward seven-day-a-week / weekend meals.

Discussion: Donald Sakamoto asked about senior transportation; Kauai described rural Hawaiʻi Island challenges and existing options (Coordinated Services for the Elderly under Parks and Recreation, a contract with the Hawaiʻi County Economic Opportunity Council (HCEOC) nonprofit, and medical-taxi

connections), and noted interest in a retired-volunteer driver program. During the question-and-answer period, the in-room internet connection dropped and the main Zoom room was lost.

Adjournment

After the connection was lost during the Office of Aging question-and-answer period, the council attempted a brief recess (~12:24 PM), but internet connectivity remained unstable. The Chair ended the meeting approximately 20 minutes early, at about 12:38 PM; no further formal SILC business was conducted. The Chair thanked all attendees and both ASL interpreters.