STATEWIDE
INDEPENDENT
LIVING COUNCIL
OF HAWAII

Hawaii SILC Policies and Procedures Manual

Call or Text: (808) 585-7452 Email: info@HawaiiSILC.org Online: www.IndependentLivingHawaii.org
643 Ilalo St Suite 1000, Honolulu HI 96813

Training Goals

By the end of this training, you will be able to:

- Describe what the manual covers and how it is governed
- State clearly what is expected of you as a Council member
- Identify the actions that are not allowed
- Recognize, disclose, and handle a conflict of interest correctly
- Name the forms you must sign and when

About the Manual

- Mission: the Hawaii SILC promotes choice, equal access, and full inclusion of people with disabilities throughout the State of Hawaii
- The SILC is an autonomous government entity under Title VII, Chapter 1, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA (2014)
- This is a living document. Policies and procedures can be reviewed and amended over time
- Policy changes are adopted by the full Council. Procedure changes are approved by the Executive Committee. Proposed changes go to the approving body at least two weeks before adoption
- You are expected to stay informed about changes (Appendix C)
- If the bylaws and a policy conflict, the bylaws take precedence

Accessibility: What Is Expected of You

The Council provides ADA-compliant venues, video conferencing, and, with reasonable notice, interpreters, captioning, assistive listening, and alternative formats.

Required of you:

- If you present, make your presentation and materials accessible to people with mobility, hearing, vision, and cognitive disabilities
- Send presentation items to staff in accessible electronic format as soon as practicable
- Follow the fragrance-free policy

Be aware:

- An agenda item may be deferred if its materials were not provided in accessible format in time

Communications: What Is Not Allowed

Not allowed:

- Speaking or acting on behalf of the Council without specific authorization
- Testifying for, or representing, the SILC at any external meeting without prior authorization. This includes the State Legislature, City Council, federal agencies, and other governmental bodies
- Issuing official Council correspondence, or signing the SILC on to a letter, without approval

Also:

- Public meetings are not the place to resolve operational issues. The Council handles those at the appropriate administrative level

Communications: How to Get Authorization

- To testify for or represent the SILC at an external meeting, you need approval from both the Chair and the Vice Chair
- If one of them is absent, the other may approve, in consultation with and with the approval of the Executive Director
- To seek authorization, contact the Executive Director in advance of the meeting whenever practicable
- Official correspondence needs the Chair's approval before it is issued.
- Sign-on requests need the Chair and Vice Chair’s approval, and the Executive Director signs for the SILC
- If you testify as a private individual, clearly state that you are not representing the SILC and that the views are your own

Council Funds: What Members Need to Know

- Members receive no compensation except as Council policy specifies
- The Executive Director may approve payments up to $500. Larger payments need two of: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, or Executive Director
- Only the full Council, by recorded motion, may open or close accounts and name signers
- No one person alone may transfer Council funds to an account the Council does not own. Account credentials are never shared
- Only non-federal, unrestricted funds may be invested, and only in insured deposits, insured CDs, or U.S. government securities and funds

Travel and Expense Reimbursement

- Receipts are required for everything except the meal per diem. Lost receipts need a form signed by the Chair and Treasurer
- Alcohol is never reimbursed
- Combining Council and personal travel? Say so. Only the Council portion is reimbursed
- Conferences are reimbursed only if the Council assigns you and the Chair approves in advance

Questions: General Policies

Any questions about accessibility, communications, Council funds, or travel and reimbursement?

Membership and Conduct Standards

- Members are volunteers, not state employees. Appointed members serve three-year terms, up to two consecutive terms
- Ex officio members may join discussions but cannot vote and do not count toward quorum
- A member who seeks a Council job must resign from the Council first
- Expected of every member: regular attendance, reviewing materials in advance, active participation, following policy, ethical use of resources, respectful behavior, timely conflict disclosure, and responsive communication
- New members complete orientation and required training within six months. Use any SILC email only for Council business

Attendance Expectations

- The Vice Chairperson monitors attendance
- Missing two Council meetings in a row, or one-third of meetings within 18 months, may lead to intervention
- Persistent problems may lead to corrective action or a request to resign
- Two unexcused absences within an appointed year may lead to a recommendation to the Governor for removal (Bylaws Section 2.4)

Professional Conduct: What Is Not Allowed

- Repeated or aggressive behavior meant to demean, intimidate, or undermine someone
- Unwelcome conduct based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, or another protected characteristic
- Threats, intimidation, or actions that create fear or discomfort
- Retaliation against anyone who reports a concern or takes part in an investigation

This applies everywhere:

- Meetings, events, trainings, informal gatherings, phone, email, video calls, and social media

Professional Conduct: Reporting Concerns

- Report promptly to the Chair or Vice Chair, the Executive Director or staff, or any Executive Committee member
- Reports may be written, verbal, or anonymous, and are kept confidential to the extent possible
- Consequences may include mediation, a formal warning, removal from committee or leadership roles, ending contracts, or a recommendation for removal from the Council
- Every member signs an acknowledgment of this policy each year

Questions: Member Policies

Any questions about membership, attendance, or professional conduct?

Conflict of Interest: What It Is

- A conflict exists when your personal, professional, or business interests could conflict with the Council's interests
- The rules apply to members, committee members, and staff, as soon as you recognize a conflict

Examples:

- A financial interest in an organization subject to Council decisions or oversight
- A leadership or employment role with an organization involved in a matter before the Council
- An immediate family member employed by, or financially interested in, an entity doing business with the Council
- Professional affiliations that create divided loyalties

Conflict of Interest: Potential Versus Actual

Potential conflict:

- Disclose it. You may still take part in the discussion and vote

Actual conflict:

- Disclose it. You must not take part in the discussion, and you must not vote

In both cases:

- Disclose publicly before the related discussion begins, to the Chair and Vice Chair
- The conflict is recorded in the meeting minutes
- If you are not sure, disclose

Conflict of Interest: Steps at a Meeting

1. Review the agenda in advance for anything touching your interests, employer, or family
2. Tell the Chair and Vice Chair before the item comes up
3. When the item begins, state your conflict publicly, before any discussion
4. If the conflict is actual, stay out of the discussion and do not vote
5. Confirm that the conflict is recorded in the minutes

Conflict of Interest: Absolute Rules

Not allowed:

- Contracting with the Council while you are a member, or for six months after you leave
- Using your Council position for personal gain, or to benefit family or associates
- Taking part in choosing a financial institution or investment provider you have an interest in. Disclose and recuse yourself

Appendix A, Incompatible Activities, also prohibits:

- Accepting gifts from entities doing business with, or regulated by, the state
- Receiving payment from non-state sources for performing official duties

Conflict of Interest: Disclosure Rules

- Complete the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement at the start of every calendar year, listing financial interests, employment, and affiliations
- The annual statement does not replace disclosure at meetings. Disclose new conflicts as they arise
- If an undisclosed conflict is discovered, the Chair and Vice Chair are informed, and the person may explain
- Corrective action may include more training, withdrawing from transactions, or a request to resign. Violations are documented

Conflict of Interest: Practice Scenarios

Scenario 1:

Your spouse works for a company bidding to provide captioning services to the Council. What do you do?

Scenario 2:

Your term ends in March. In June, the Council seeks a contractor, and you want to apply. Can you?

Practice Scenarios: Answers

Scenario 1:

Disclose to the Chair and Vice Chair and publicly before discussion. A family member employed by a bidder is likely an actual conflict, so expect to abstain from discussion and voting.

Scenario 2:

No. Members may not contract with the Council for six months after leaving, so not until September.

Questions: Conflict of Interest

Any questions about conflicts of interest, disclosure, or the practice scenarios?

Code of Ethics: Commitments 1 and 2

Commitment 1: Uphold all laws and rules that apply to federal fund recipients and the SILC

- What it means: the SILC runs on federal funds, so federal grant rules, the Rehabilitation Act, and state laws such as the Sunshine Law apply to your Council work
- Example: federal funds may not pay for grassroots lobbying campaigns aimed at Congress, or to influence federal officials about grants and contracts (Appendix B)

Commitment 2: Make decisions that ensure equal access and independent living

- What it means: judge every decision by whether it advances equal access and independent living for people with disabilities statewide
- Example: when voting the SPIL, ask how it serves people with disabilities on every island

Code of Ethics: Commitments 3 and 4

Commitment 3: Help develop policies and plans only after stakeholders are consulted

- What it means: the Council's role is policy-making, planning, and evaluation, and people affected by a decision get a say before it is made
- Example: SPIL changes go out for public input across the islands before the Council adopts them

Commitment 4: Do not interfere in day-to-day operations of SILC staff or Centers for Independent Living

- What it means: members work together to provide oversight and guidance on the State Plan, not day-to-day management
- Example: do not assign tasks to staff or tell a Center how to run its programs. Bring concerns to the Executive Director or through the Council

Code of Ethics: Commitments 5 and 6

Commitment 5: Authority belongs to the Council as a whole

- What it means: no individual member can commit the Council or act privately in ways that could compromise it
- Example: if a legislator asks whether the SILC supports a bill, do not promise anything. Refer the question to the Chair and Executive Director

Commitment 6: Keep independent judgment, and never use your position for personal gain

- What it means: decide based on the Council's mission, not pressure from special interests or partisan groups, and never to benefit yourself, family, or associates
- Example: do not use your SILC title to help a relative get a contract or a job

Code of Ethics: Commitments 7 and 8

Commitment 7: Show respect for everyone and protect their rights and dignity

- What it means: no bullying, threats, or intimidation toward members, staff, or stakeholders, including Hawaii's diverse cultural communities
- Example: disagree with ideas, not people, in meetings, email, and on social media

Commitment 8: Refer complaints to the Executive Committee

- What it means: complaints go through the administrative process first. Act on a public complaint only after that has been tried and has not worked
- Example: if a community member emails you a complaint about a service, forward it to the Executive Committee rather than raising it first at a public meeting or online

Code of Ethics: Commitment 9 and Signing

Commitment 9: Respect Hawaii's unique cultural heritage

- What it means: Independent Living services should be culturally appropriate and accessible to every community on every island
- Example: support outreach to neighbor islands and to Native Hawaiian and other communities, in ways that fit those communities

Signing the Code:

- All current and prospective members and staff must sign it. It was last revised on September 17, 2026
- Breaking the Code can also break related policies, such as conflict of interest or professional conduct, which carry their own consequences

Questions: Committees and Code of Ethics

Any questions about committees, the State Plan, or the Code of Ethics?

Summary: What You Must Do

- Attend regularly, review materials in advance, and serve on a committee
- New members: complete orientation and training within six months
- Disclose conflicts before discussion, and abstain if the conflict is actual
- Get Chair and Vice Chair approval before testifying for or representing the SILC
- Say clearly when you speak only for yourself
- Make presentation materials accessible and send them early
- Submit expenses within 30 days, or 7 days with an advance
- Report conduct concerns promptly

Summary: What Is Not Allowed

- Speaking, acting, or testifying for the Council, or issuing official correspondence, without authorization
- Discussing or voting on a matter where you have an actual conflict
- Contracting with the Council during your term or for six months after
- Using your position for personal gain, or accepting gifts from entities doing business with or regulated by the state (Appendix A)
- Bullying, threats, harassment, or retaliation, in person or online
- Using SILC email or materials for non-Council purposes
- Interfering in staff or Center for Independent Living operations
- Claiming alcohol or personal travel costs

Forms You Must Sign

- Code of Ethics acknowledgment (Section 4)
- Member Acknowledgment and Agreement Form (Appendix C)
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement, every year
- Professional Conduct acknowledgment, every year

Accessible versions of every form are available from staff on request.

Questions and Contacts

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