Volume 2 Issue 7 | July 2025

NEW YORK STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL, INC.

NYSILC

empowering new yorkers with disabilities

NYSILC News, July 2025

Profile in Excellence

NYSILC Council Member
Lisa Ackerman-Todt

Lisa Ackerman-Todt is a dedicated Preparedness and Deliverables Planner with the New York State Department of Health, where she collaborates with 57 local health departments across the state (excluding NYC) and numerous partner agencies. In her role, she expertly manages contract deliverables, tracking, and data analysis, while also supporting the development and coordination of emergency response plans and trainings. Lisa's deep commitment to public health was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, where she played multiple critical roles in the state's emergency response due to her extensive training and versatility.

Lisa holds a Master of Public Health (MPH) from the University at Albany School of Public Health and is currently pursuing her degree in Health Law and Compliance at Albany Law School. She is also a Board-Certified Fire and Life Safety Educator (FLSE), using her expertise to promote life-saving education in fire prevention, injury prevention, and community risk reduction.

In addition to her professional and academic achievements, Lisa is a passionate advocate for disability awareness and inclusion. Living with multiple disabilities, including Vestibular Schwannoma, she challenges societal assumptions about what disability "looks like" and emphasizes that many disabilities are not immediately visible. She speaks openly about the importance of recognizing and respecting both visible and non-visible disabilities—her advocacy centers on shifting the focus from perceived limitations to individual strengths.

With resilience, intellect, and heart, Lisa continues to lead by example—breaking barriers, building awareness, and improving lives.

NYSILC NYS Disability Rights Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Dinner

Congratulations to the 5 inductees in this year's Hall of Fame!

Diane Coleman (posthumous)
Christina Curry
Doug Hovey
Bryan O'Malley
Sharon Shapiro (Lacks)

This year, NYSILC is partnering with the New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) to host the Hall of Fame induction ceremony and dinner on September 16th, 2025 at 5:30pm as a part of NYAIL's Statewide Conference.

Tickets are $100 - buy yours here (Scroll down on the form to choose registration to the NYAIL conference or Hall of Fame dinner only).

You can also support the NYS Disability Rights Hall of Fame by becoming an Honorary Committee Member (includes one ticket to the dinner & event) or by donating an item to be included in one of our raffle baskets.

New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL)

2025 Conference - Leading the Way
"Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders Today"

September 16-17, 2025 at Albany Capital Center

The "Leading the Way" theme embodies the principles of achieving diversity, equity, intersectionality, and accessibility that drive the Independent Living community forward. Leading the Way emphasizes the value of focusing on leadership, advocacy, and innovation in the disability rights movement.

NYAIL is proud to offer a range of partnership opportunities designed to meet your goals for visibility, community engagement, and social impact. Custom partnership packages are also available—let's cocreate something that reflects your mission. **Please visit the partnership webpage or email conference@ilny.org for more information.**

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to connect with fellow advocates and leaders, learn from the best in the field, and help shape the future of Independent Living in New York. **Register now!**

35th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

NYSILC is proud to support the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 35th Anniversary. On July 26th, we celebrate this important civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life. The passage of the ADA has improved access and removed barriers in communities across the United States.

While we celebrate the ADA on its 35th anniversary, we also acknowledge that New York's disability community is being threatened, both at home and on the national level. NYSILC and the Independent Living Network are committed to facing these challenges head-on and working together to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities.

Celebrating 35 Years

Honoring Our Past, Empowering the Future

HILC - Celebrating 35 Years of Advocacy and Empowerment!

This year marks the **35th anniversary** of the **Harlem Independent Living Center (HILC)**—a trusted, community-based organization incorporated in **1990** to support and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in Harlem and across New York City. For over three decades, HILC has worked to promote independence, accessibility, and inclusion through peer support, advocacy, and direct services.

As part of this milestone, HILC will host a **35th Anniversary and Office Reopening Celebration** on **Wednesday, August 13, 2025**, followed by a **Community Open House** on **Friday, August 15**, where residents, partners, and supporters are invited to tour our newly renovated offices and connect with our team. To learn more, visit the HILC website.

NYSILC Council Members

Executive Committee

Chair: Yaw Appiadu

Vice Chair: Lindsay Miller

Secretary: Beata Karpinska-Prehn

Treasurer: Stephanie Woodward

Member at Large: John Zick

STAFF

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From NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)-
National Minority Mental Health Month

In many marginalized communities, mental health challenges have long been silenced—buried under stigma, isolation, and lack of access. Today, a powerful shift is underway. Brave voices are rising. Stories are being shared. At NAMI, we see it every day: one conversation can spark hope, build trust, and start the healing process.

At NAMI, we witness this transformation daily. We see how one honest conversation can spark healing, how one person's courage to speak up can save someone else's life, and how communities that come together can become the medicine that creates hope, healing, recovery, and wellness.

This month isn't just about awareness—it's about action. It's about creating the kind of mental health support these communities have always

deserved: accessible, affirming, and rooted in the strength that's found in vulnerability. This month and every month we're breaking down barriers and building bridges, proving that when people come together with open hearts and honest voices, healing becomes possible. It starts with one conversation. Will you be part of it?

Learn more and get involved!

Interested in a Pat Figueroa Scholarship for youth/young adults with disabilities in New York?

The scholarship provides funding for young adults with disabilities to attend and participate in independent living related conferences and/or national disability and leadership trainings.

Learn more or apply here!

Upcoming NYSILC events/activities:

- Next NYSILC Full Council Meeting - **Friday, September 26, 2025** from 9:30 am to 1 pm at the Wolf Road Marriott in Albany and remotely via Zoom.

Please visit https://nysilc.org/council/meetings-calendar for details.

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