



Minutes

SILC Meeting August 19-20, 2014

Wilderness Room, Colonial Building

Members Present: June Hermanson, Mary Taylor, Monique Casbeer, Dick Trerise (Tuesday only), Tom Osborn, Lori Gaustad, Michelle Williamson, Elizabeth Varnum, Robin Idol, Troy Spang (phone), Astghik Iknatian (phone), Jim Brown (phone)

Members Absent: Courtney Damron

Staff and Visitors Present: Peggy Williams, Karie Whitlock, Jim Marks, Mary Taylor, Bob Maffit, Mike Mayer (phone), Joe Burst (phone), Scott Williamson, Michael Beers

Orientation for new members

Before the meeting, June Hermanson and Mary Olson talked to the four new SILC members (Lori, Elizabeth, Robin, Monique) about the SILC and IL in Montana.

June called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Introductions were made, the May meeting minutes were approved, and the August teleconference minutes were approved. There was no public comment.

Update of Disability Employment & Transitions Division

Jim Marks updated the SILC on national and state news. We are in a time of change. Congress just passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which reauthorized the Rehabilitation Act. Some of the changes are that IL will move from the federal Department of Education to Health and Human Services—Administration on Community Living. The center directors must now sign off on the SPIL, and the SILC will determine what agency will be the designated state unit for IL. The final regulations will probably take a couple years. In the area of Vocational Rehabilitation, the new act emphasizes transitions and restricts some subminimum wages. A person with a disability who is younger than 24 cannot be placed in a subminimum wage job unless VR says the person cannot work in regular employment. If a person is in a subminimum wage job, he must be visited once a year by an advocate. This may be something that IL can do. The new act also emphasizes relationships with businesses. Jim mentioned that the regional technical assistance centers are going away, to be replaced with one central center that will concentrate on business. The new law also reduces the qualifications for Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. Currently counselors must have masters degrees (in Montana, the

agency will help pay for that) in rehabilitation counseling, but the new qualifications are only a bachelors degree in business. People are concerned that colleges may lose some of their federal funding for rehabilitation counseling.

On the state side, the Executive Planning Process (EPP) is going on now. The Disability Employment and Transitions Division submitted twelve requests for budget increases, and has only heard back on a few. The request to increase MYLF/MYT was not allowed and neither was the request to increase funding for Centers for Independent Living. We should hear more in the next couple months.

Update on SILC business

Peggy discussed some of the activities that have occurred in the past few months.

- We made changes to the SPIL on equalization and on Goal 4, and they have been accepted by the feds.
- Program Manager recruitment is going on. The original recruitment resulted in too small an applicant pool, so the position has been re-advertised. The closing date is August 22.
- Site reviews by the feds were scheduled to occur in September for MILP and Summit. But RSA decided that since IL is moving to HHS, the reviews could wait.
- Peggy has started reviewing things on the website and has made some updates, but mostly we will wait until the new person is hired.
- We are out of federal compliance with our membership. We are required to have two things:
 - (1) majority of members must be persons with a disability not working for the state or CILs. *Not ok--we have 6/13.*
 - (2) majority of voting members must be persons with a disability not working for the state or CILs. *Ok--we have 6/11.*

RSA said we have to fix it before the natural turnover will allow us to fix it next year. Only Mary's term ends this year.

Services Offered by Centers for Independent Living

Summit—Mike Mayer stated that Summit has the smallest of the four service areas but has nearly one third of the state's population. They have offices in Missoula, Hamilton, Kalispell and Ronan. They offer the four core services. In the area of peers, they pay peers and have about 30 active ones. They used to do annual training, but now people are brought on as needed and trained individually. Most people don't want a one on one peer. Summit offers social activities and support groups. They offer skill training classes on Living Well with a Disability, Working Well with a Disability, relationships, independence and gratitude, and Social Security assistance. They are also working with transition aged students.

LIFTT—Joe Burst stated that LIFTT serves 18 counties in eastern Montana. Their advocacy activities include parking in downtown Billings, working with the VA, housing visitability, encouraging Bakken area employers to consider people with disabilities. They are starting an

Action Group for people with disabilities—this is a part of Kiwanis. Recently they bought an accessible van.

NCILS—Tom Osborn reported that NCILS serves 17 counties and has offices in Black Eagle (Great Falls) and Glasgow. Fifty percent of the population of their large territory is in Cascade county. They serve four reservations. Tom mentioned that VR has made 8 referrals to NCILS’ Living Well with a Disability class this year. They have 10 active peers, and host a quarterly legislative day where over 40 consumers usually show up. NCILS also houses MYLF and MYTransitions. They hold the WIPA contract for benefits counseling.

MILP—Bob Maffit stated that MILP serves 14 counties with offices in Helena, Butte, and Bozeman. Some of their advocacy activities include instituting a temporary voucher program in conjunction with the Helena bus service and working with the city to require sidewalks in new neighborhoods. They recently hired an architect who can guide consumers with home modifications, and hired an orientation and mobility specialist who helps people who are blind learn to navigate. They run “gym dandy”, an exercise and nutrition program for people with disabilities in Butte.

Surplus money—Planning for the training on youth (SILC members to attend)

Mary talked about planning the training session on September 12 and 13 (Friday-Saturday). SILC members, regional coordinators, and two people from each center are invited. The session will be Friday afternoon from 1 to 5, and Saturday, all day. The training is called “Bringing Youth on Board” and will be presented by Mary Olson and Mike Beers.

Budget Overview - Karie Whitlock

Karie talked about the IL budget which is composed of Part C, Part B, General Fund, Social Security, and Section 110. The total budget is about \$845,000. She is projecting a surplus this year of about \$19,000. This is the money we will use to fund the SILC training and to provide the education committee \$3,000. The money must be spent by September 30.

Committee Meetings and Report Out

Each of the committees met and reported out with upcoming meeting information as follows:

Sheltered Employment—Tom, Lori, Courtney, Astghik

August 25	1-2
Sept 8	1-2
Sept 29	1-2

We need to define the direction, and we don’t want to shame current providers. We want to educate ourselves and look at the Vermont model, maybe send a couple people out there. We may need some technical assistance, and there may be a cost.

SPIL Evaluation—Monique, Peggy, Mike, Tom, Mary

Sept 24	12-1
Oct 22	12-1

We will meet in September to set up a game plan, then when the program manager is hired, that person can address each of the goals/objectives, and we can plan from there.

Nominations—June, Monique, Joe, Troy

Sept 15 11:30-12:30

Each person will leave the meeting with three applications for SILC membership. The applications will also be distributed at conferences: MAR, NAMI, and Transitions. We can check with the department for agency wide distribution, and also distribute them through the Friends of Rehab distribution list.

Education—Mary, Michelle, Elizabeth, Robin, Dick, Astghik

August 25 4-5

Sept 8 4-5

Sept 15 4-5

Sept 22 4-5

Sept 29 4-5

The education committee discussed many needs of education to raise people's awareness of disability: language etiquette; service animal etiquette; disability parking and illegal parking; improper usage of disability parking; better police enforcement of the importance of parking spaces for people with disabilities; curb cuts; awareness on the laws and what is required by law; education on the law to the city and businesses; the need for small businesses to have accessible or automatic doors to get in. (maybe like good access is good business certificate); education on the discretionary spending power of people with disabilities.

Methods: videos- television commercials; newspapers; radio ads; PSA's; materials for in person trainings on awareness like to people in the police stations; using comedy and comedy skits for education. Educate the public on what the SILC is: Can we do a flip cam video on what the SILC is and disseminate it. Michelle wants to put together a brochure that says what the SILC is in order to educate people on what we do. Maybe produce and create a video that then could be distributed to CILs for them to use for an educational tool. Youtube and computers are useful tools for education. Have someone give a 30 second schpeel about how they can get involved as a SILC member and what the benefit for them would be in order to get involved in the SILC.

ASPIRE Project – Mary Taylor, Site Coordinator

Mary discussed the ASPIRE project, which is a study of 14 to 16 year old students receiving Supplemental Security Income. The students will be placed into one of two groups—usual services (the control group) and ASPIRE services. The ASPIRE services group will receive case management, self determination training, paid employment while in high school, benefits counseling, parent education and training, and financial education and capability training. The hypothesis is that improved service provision and coordination will result in improved education, employment, and self determination. Montana will recruit 130 students to participate—65 will be in the control group and 65 in the ASPIRE services group.

NCILS Conference

Joe Burst gave a brief summary of the NCILS conference. It occurred when the president signed WIOA. There were five days of workshops, information and a march to the Capitol. The Montana delegation met with all three congress members.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey and Needs Assessment—Mary Olson

Mary volunteered to revamp the consumer satisfaction survey. We need to look at whom to survey and make sure that we are being consistent across the centers. We also need more meaningful questions, and we can look at different survey methods—phone, internet, mail. Mary will work with Monique and Elizabeth to come up with new ideas.

Wednesday, August 20

VR Council Update – Tom Osborn

The VR Council has not met since the last SILC meeting, so there was no update.

IL Task Force Presentations and Contact Info

Each of the task forces reported on their mission and activities.

IL Task Forces--Updated 8/2014

Task Forces	Chair	Center	Meeting time
Self Determination	Mike Mayer (406) 728-1630	Summit	Every other Wed at 1:30
Transportation	Shyla Patera (406) 452-9834	NCILS	Sept 5--generally 11 on a Friday, once per month
	Colleen Forrester	NCILS	
Community Living	Joe Burst (406) 259-5181	LIFTT	3rd Thurs 10am
	Larry Ketchum	LIFTT	
Public Relations	Jed Barton (406) 259-5181	LIFTT	4th Tues 1:pm
	Justice Ender	Summit	
Youth & Employment	Mike Beers (406) 728-1630	Summit	2nd Tues 10 am
	Cara Wherley	Summit	
Native American	Michelle Williamson (406) 676-0190 Troy Spang	Summit	2nd Tues 10 am
<u>Legislative</u> Advocacy	Mike Mayer (406) 728-1630	Summit	Every other Wed 10:30-noon
	Tom Osborn	NCILS	

Self Determination

The 2014 priorities include:

- Developing legislative priorities for EPP, including rebasing the HCBS waiver budget to reflect realistic costs for consumer services; addressing the Medicaid spend down threshold issue in the Medically Needy Program; continuing appropriations for the MFP Housing Bridge funding.
- Amending the administrative rules on the definition of “community setting” for use of Medicaid HCBS waiver funding.
- Advocacy and ongoing participation in the implementation of the Money Follows the Person program
- Implementation of the Community First Choice Option in Medicaid Personal Assistance Services
- Developing a conceptual framework for an Olmstead oversight council.

Transportation

The Transportation Task Force advocates for affordable accessible transportation options that benefit Montanans with disabilities. This task force is getting ready for the legislature and looking at TransAde and rental car tax. They are encouraging people to join their local Transportation Advisory Council.

Community Living

The main areas of focus for this committee are the Housing Bridge program, which is a short term rental assistance program targeting individuals transitioning from institutions into the community, and visitability, a concept that encourages all houses to be accessible enough to be accessed by a person with a disability.

Public Relations

Current task force activities include:

- Compiling a statewide database of outreach contacts by category and center using Google Drive.
- Coordinating ADA 25th anniversary activities across Montana for 2015.
- Conducting a survey of center staff and peers regarding the branding and marketing of IL on a statewide level.

Native American

This task force has a Facebook page. Troy is working on a stand down project in Glendive for September, and is connecting with the VA. The task force encourages people to use native languages in PR materials in reservation areas.

Legislative/Advocacy

This task force deals with current events as things come up. The task forces come together and report out on their different activities. They are working on the ADA 25th year celebration.

Money Follows the Person and Community First Choice Option Updates – Mike Mayer

Money Follows the Person is a federal grant that can provide resources and additional services to help people move out of institutions/nursing homes into the community. The person must have been institutionalized for at least 90 days. The SILC got the state to apply for the grant in 2012. Last legislative session, \$400,000 was appropriated for Housing Bridge services, temporarily helping people with rent. Traci Clark is the statewide director, and about 6 weeks ago the other 3 positions were filled.

The Community First Choice Option is an enhancement to self direct and agency PCA services. Most people currently receiving services will be eligible for some additional services. Community integration services will be allowed for things like social activities, movies, and work.

Reflections-- What do we think we are doing well? What can we be doing better at? Are there thoughts/ideas/ projects that we talked about doing that you feel we have dropped or forgotten about? Are there committees or projects you volunteered for that you haven't had a chance to be a part of yet? What has been the biggest barrier to being a part of that project or task force?

Some of the comments offered include:

- With reauthorization, the new law will allow the SILC to do more, including resource development. We need to develop a dialog on the state level—talk to the governor on what activities we can go forward with and what we should stay away from.
- There are exciting changes with the reauthorization. We can get back to some of our previous activities—white papers, systems change, etc.
- We can do possibility thinking—maybe get a different DSU.
- People are starting to get more involved. Maybe do more work with the aging community.
- Encouraged to see the SILC, committees, and task force advocacy.
- Excited regarding PR, education, branding symbol that ties all centers together.
- Need to get more people involved. It's hard to do task forces during the day because of work. How can we keep people updated on task forces if we don't do minutes?
- SILC is taking a more active role by getting members involved in task forces. How do we mesh SILC work with what centers do day to day?
- It would be nice for someone to take minutes at the task forces and put them on the web.
- Some task forces have Facebook pages.
- Maybe we could record the task forces and put a link on the webpage.
- I am encouraged, and I like the self directing of MFP and CFCO.
- How do we get more consumers involved in IL?
- There should be more training and more training activities.
- We need to educate centers and others that the SILC represents all people with disabilities.
- Maybe ask SILC members to visit centers, not just the one in their neighborhood.
- We need speakers from other organizations—and maybe just an informal conversation as part of the meeting.
- Need to continue to integrate culture and develop a better cultural awareness. Put Native American and cultural issues on the agenda—maybe a lunch topic.

Meeting dates for next year:

November 18, 2014	All day conference call
January 27, 2015	All day meeting before Legislative day
January 28, 2015	Legislative Day
April 21-22, 2015	Meeting—Full day the first day, half day the second day
August 17-18, 2015	Meeting—Half day the first day, full day the second day