

Statewide Independent Living Council Minutes Helena—Wilderness Room January 24, 2013

Members present: June Hermanson, Monica Garrahan, Dick Trerise, Courtney Damron, Amanda Haley, Michelle Williamson

Members on phone: Troy Spang, Tom Osborn, Jim Brown, Jim Morrison

Members not present: Chris Craigwick, Donnell Neiss (excused), Melissa Case (excused)

Staff present: Peggy Williams, Kathy Brook, Beverly Berg

Visitors present: Scott Williamson, Joe Burst, Mike Mayer (on phone)

The meeting was called to order, and members introduced themselves. The minutes from December and July were approved. Updated manuals were distributed to all members.

Orientation

June Hermanson gave an overview of the SILC and Montana Centers for Independent Living. She also went through the SILC manual. Montana has four centers for independent living: Summit Independent Living Center in Missoula; Montana Independent Living Project (MILP) in Helena; North Central Independent Living Services (NCILS) in Great Falls; and Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) in Billings. June also mentioned that SILCs in some states are private, nonprofit entities, while in Montana it is part of state government. Montana's philosophy has been to funnel as many of the independent living funds as possible to the four centers, rather than have the SILC do statewide projects.

Center Reports

NCILS director Tom Osborn stated that NCILS has completed the Safe Routes to Schools small grant that measured accessibility around schools. They found that all the schools met the criteria in the first zone (within one block of the school), only 50 % of the schools met the requirements in the second zone, and the compliance was worse in the third zone. Tom also mentioned that Great Falls has not yet adopted the "complete streets process", but they are working with the city commission. Tom stated that the Social Security benefits planning lost its federal funding, but the centers and Vocational Rehabilitation have developed a fee for service arrangement for VR clients.

Summit director Mike Mayer highlighted Summit's youth programs, specifically the Building Advocacy and Learning Leadership (BALLS) program that is offered in local high schools. It is a six week class that meets once per week during the school day and helps students learn the history of independent living, leadership skills and self-advocacy skills.

LIFTT director Joe Burst talked about LIFTT's move to a new facility. RSA had concerns about accessibility in the old location. The new facility is all on one floor and even has a community room available for other organizations to use.

Satisfaction Survey and Needs Assessment

Peggy Williams went over the satisfaction survey and needs assessment results. This survey is completed annually, and the results are compiled both statewide and by center. On the statewide side, 86% of the respondents said that the IL services they received adequately met their needs, and only 6% said they were not satisfied with the services they received. The needs assessment portion of the survey identified the top issues respondents would like independent living to focus on as (1) improve Medicaid options for persons with disabilities; (2) expand IL services and options; and (3) improve benefits and supports for personal care workers.

Budget

Peggy Williams went over the budget summary sheet. Last year independent living overspent its budget by about \$7,000, and this year the projections seem worse. Most (\$761,000) of the IL money is spent on contracts with the IL centers. Only \$59,000 is budgeted for administration and \$23,000 for SILC expenses. Peggy will get more background on the numbers, and the issue will be discussed at the February 13 executive committee meeting and also at the next SILC meeting on March 7.

The SILC asked Peggy for a breakdown of the expenses, which she is providing after the meeting. Below is that information for this fiscal year.

[Update after the meeting]

Non-SILC expenses October thru December

Personal Services (salaries, benefits, etc)	21,360
Supplies	92
Communications	316
Rent	2,221
Other	596
Indirects	3,656

SILC expenses October thru December

Printing	400
Communication	17
Travel	1,434
Other	420

Obviously personal services make up the bulk of the costs. IL pays for 1.5 staff—Julie and her work assistant Kathy. Under SILC expenses, printing costs of \$400 were for the SILC survey, and travel costs of \$1,434 were for SILC members traveling to the transitions conference.

704 Reports

Peggy Williams went over the statewide 704 report that is submitted to the federal government each year. This report highlights how we spent our money and what activities we conducted. It also is a mechanism for the federal government to use to make sure we are doing what we are supposed to. In addition to a statewide report, each center prepares a report on their activities. These were all included in the handouts.

Disability-related Bills in the Legislature

The list of bills related to disability issues is included as Attachment A. This list has been updated since the meeting.

The Disability Employment and Transitions Division budget hearing will be February 5. At this time, the committee will hear the presentation, listen to public testimony, and conduct executive action.

Committees

June Hermanson talked about the committees that are under the SILC. Many of the committees are not active at this time, and the SILC will think about whether they should be continued. The committees may have members other than SILC members.

- The By Laws/Budget committee reviews and makes recommendations regarding the bylaws and the budget. During the past couple years; the SILC has not gotten consistent budget information from the state. Now, the state is committing to regular budget reports.
- The State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) Evaluation committee helps draft the SPIL every three years and reviews it quarterly (it is due this June 30). This year our goal is to simplify the SPIL which will make it more user-friendly. The SPIL committee will come up with ideas for the SPIL, and the staff will draft it for committee and SILC consideration.
- The Nominations committee recruits new members and presents a slate of nominations for officers.
- The Systems Advocacy and Legislative committee responds to issues that affect people with disabilities as directed by the SILC.
- The Unserved and Underserved committee reviews issues that affect people with disabilities who are designated as unserved or underserved.
- The Autonomy committee review options for the structure of the SILC—should it be within state government or should it be a private nonprofit entity. This issue has been studied in the past, but no conclusion was reached.

After the SPIL (State Plan for Independent Living) is written, the SILC will decide whether to reactivate some of the committees that are not active.

In additions to the SILC committees, there are task forces that were developed during an IL symposium. Symposium participants determined what areas independent living advocacy efforts should concentrate on. These task forces include:

- Legislative advocacy
- Self determination
- Native American
- Housing
- Public relations and education
- Youth

These task forces are all active and report out in biweekly legislative advocacy teleconferences. SILC members are invited to join a task force if they are interested. After the SPIL is written, the SILC membership list will be revised to include the committees and task forces that members are involved in.

In the past, the SILC has listed every committee, task force, and advocacy group as a standing agenda item. It was suggested that instead the SILC should calendar advocacy groups and rotate presentations. Committees/task forces should be included on the agenda if they have something new to report.

Monica expressed interest in the Public Relations task force, and Courtney expressed interest in the Advocacy one.

Older Blind Program and Statewide Support Group for the Blind

Beverly Berg described the Older Blind Program which serves people with visual impairments who are over 55 years old. The program is under Independent Living in the Rehabilitation Act. Blind and Low Vision staff provide training in daily living skills and low vision and provide equipment. The need for this training is so great that the Blind and Low Vision program is recruiting for a new position—Vision Rehabilitation Therapist—in the Kalispell area. Each year about 630 people are served under this program.

Beverly also stated that consumers have requested to be able to talk to someone with the same eye condition on things like dealing with day to day activities. Beverly asked if the centers would be interested in helping out with something like this. The directors asked that Beverly email out more information on this.

Update from Disability Employment and Transitions Division

Peggy Williams gave a brief update on the Disability Employment and Transitions Division (DETD). The VR Council met January 17 and 18, and Rick Heitz from the Kalispell branch of Summit gave an overview of IL. Peggy also mentioned the name change—when referring to Montana Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind/Low Vision Services, the agency will use the

words Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services—abbreviated VRB Services. LR 121 regarding services to immigrants will affect VRB Services, but probably not IL services. This law says that the state must not provide services to illegal immigrants. VRB Services is working on rules to administer this. Federal sequestration will likely affect VRB Services and IL. More information will be available at the end of March. VRB Services is preparing for the possibility of Order of Selection. This is the process that will be used when not enough funding is available to serve all eligible consumers. Federal law states that the most significantly people with disabilities must be served first, but states are allowed to determine who is most significantly disabled.

Legislative Day Details

Legislative Day (January 25) was discussed. It will begin at 9:00 am at the Holiday Inn. At about 11:00, participants will be bused to the capitol to meet with Legislators and eat a potato bar lunch. Then participants will come back to the Holiday Inn to debrief. The event is funded by the centers for independent living and does not use federal funds.

Miscellaneous Topics

SILC Governor's Report

The SILC decided that the current Governor's Report is too long which means very few people will read it. The SILC liked the look of the VR Council's governor's report which is simple and easy to read. Peggy will work with Monica to draft a report for the SILC to review. Each of the centers will send a success story to Peggy by February 8.

SILC Award

Last year the SILC gave an award to the Housing Task Force for the advocacy work they did. The SILC considered whether to present this award again. Presentation of the award was done at the VR All Staff Meeting and at the MYLF banquet, neither of which was a good arena. Since the centers for independent living may hold a symposium this summer, that may be a good venue. Another option would be to present the award at a SILC meeting or at the Montana Association of Rehabilitation conference or the Transitions conference and invite the press. It would not have to be presented annually. No one wanted to volunteer to be the point person to handle this, so no action was taken.

State Plan for Independent Living

Peggy will send the SPIL committee members a copy of some other states SPILs, and then will arrange a time later in February for the committee to discuss these plans.

Department of Justice Grant

June was contacted about a grant for violence and abuse against women. She put the consultant in contact with the center directors.

SILC Representative to VR Council

With the resignation of Bob Maffit from the SILC, the SILC needs to appoint someone from the SILC to also serve on the VR Council. June and Monica will make that decision.

Meeting with the VR Council

The SILC invited the VR Council to meet jointly for part of a day, and the date was set for May 9. This will allow both councils to see where we can partner. We discussed options of how to set up the meeting. Ideas for agenda items include presenting an overview of the session's disability outcomes, having the DPHHS director (Richard Opper) and the branch manager (Bob Runkel) visit briefly with the councils, exchanging Governor's Reports, presenting more information on independent living. The details were not finalized as to the time of the meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment

**Next Meeting---March 7 – 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm on a teleconference
Agenda items: SPIL, budget, Governor's Report, CIL reports.**

Attachment A
Legislation Related to People with Disabilities
2-1-13

Disability Related Bills

HB 123—Revise developmental disability laws. This bill updates the terminology from mental retardation to intellectual disability.

SB 101—Revise qualifications to obtain a permit to hunt from a vehicle. This bill revises the current law which allows certain people with disabilities to hunt from a vehicle. It tightens the restrictions so that fewer people would qualify and it is supported by many in the disability community.

HB 179—Allow certain hunting licenses for disabled armed forces members. This bill allows armed forces members who have a disability access to the same hunting licenses that disabled veterans have.

HB 113—Provide Medicaid coverage for orientation and mobility services. This bill would require Medicaid to pay for orientation and mobility services for children up to age 18. Some advocates oppose this bill because it is not a medical service and currently special ed pays for the services. This bill was tabled, but PHHS will go ahead and pay for the services with Medicaid (it doesn't require a law change).

HB 108—Revise registration and proof of identity requirements for voting. This bill would require a picture id for voting, rather than the currently allowed non-picture id options. It is not supported by the disability community, and it was tabled in committee on January 25.

HB 30—Revise late registration laws—This bill would eliminate same day voter registration and require that all registrations be completed by noon Friday before the election. This bill is opposed by disability groups, because fewer people will be able to vote. This bill passed the House.

SB 185—Revise veteran public employment hiring laws. This bill clarifies the order of preferences between disabled veterans, people with disabilities, and others eligible for a hiring preference.

HB-12---Appropriate funds for provider payments for the current fiscal year. This bill gives a provider rate increase to certain providers in the department. It does not affect DETD.

HB16---Revise involuntary commitment and emergency detention laws. This bill allows for emergency detention of a person with a mental illness in certain cases. It has passed the House.

HB219—Require policies to discourage bullying in schools. This bill requires school districts to establish anti-bullying policies.

HB238—Consider housing needs in discharge plans from mental health facilities. This bill requires that housing needs be addressed when a person is discharged from a mental health facility.

HB241—Require DPHHS to provide Medicaid recipients with an explanation of benefits. This bill requires that this be done quarterly.

HB289---Study institutions serving people with mental illness and other conditions. This bill requires that an interim legislative committee study state institutions including Montana Developmental Center and Warm Springs.

SB7—Revise Medicaid application process. This bill allows people to apply for Medicaid electronically.

SB11—Generally revise criminal justice system laws related to mental illness. This bill revises laws relating to offenders with mental illness including conditions of release, bail, and parole.

SB43—Revise laws relating to reports of alleged abuse at Montana Developmental Center. This bill states that alleged abuse must be impartially investigated and reported.

SB112—Establish youth concussion protection laws. This bill requires schools to adopt policies regarding concussions.

Transportation bills

HB 316—Revise fuel tax revenue to fund local public transportation. This bill would help fund transportation in communities.

LC 1416—Remove PSC authority over motor carriers and transfer certain duties. This bill would mean that taxi companies would no longer be governed by the Public Services Commission.

Independent Living Priorities

Community first choice: refinancing services that help aging and disabled Montanans live at home—This budget item includes \$17 million in federal spending authority to be used to refinance and enhance Montana’s system of Medicaid funded in-home personal assistance services. This is in the Governor’s budget, and was discussed recently at the Senior and Long Term budget hearing. This is not an expansion—no new people will be added, but it will improve the services for those people currently on this program.

Personal assistance services funding—This budget item will avoid a 2.22% reduction to the personal assistance program. It was funded last biennium on a “one time only” basis, meaning that funding will end on July 1, 2013. Last session the Legislature proposed a cut to the program by reducing the amount of time PAS consumers have available to them for meal preparation to four hours per week. Later during the legislative session, a deal was worked out to restore the cut, but only until July 1, 2013. Independent living advocates are trying to get this amount permanently restored. It is not in the Governor’s budget, but it was talked about during the Senior and Long Term Care budget hearing.

Health care for health care workers—This program was initially approved during the 2007 Legislature, and helps fund the health care insurance for direct care workers. This program will expand the program and allow it to serve more workers. The cost is about \$1.7 million in total funds over the biennium (\$362,000 in state funds). It is included in the Governor’s budget.

Provider rate increases—This proposal is included in the Governor’s budget and would increase the amount that the state pays for certain services. It will affect many areas in the department, including nursing homes, personal assistance, and home and community services. Similar

proposals have been included in the Developmental Services Division and the Disability Employment and Transitions Division. The amount of increase being proposed is 2% per year.

Montana Youth Transitions—This funding would help pay for the transitions conference, disability mentoring day, and the MY Transitions web site. It is not included in the Governor's budget. The Legislature funded this program on a "one time only" basis during the 2009 legislative session. Since the proposal was first discussed, the Governor's office has directed the department to pay for the program during the current fiscal year and for future years.