

Montana Statewide Independent Living Council
and
Montana State Rehabilitation Council
DDS Conference Room
May 10, 2018

SILC Attendees: Monique Casbeer, Michelle Williamson, Jen Cleland (via phone), Leann Beers, Tracey Carlson, Bob Maffit, Betty Ann, Scott Birkenbuel, Tom Osborn (via phone)

SRC Attendees: Tiffany Costa, Nick Domitrovich, Coreen Faulkner, Kathy Hampton, Brook Hodge, Andy Kemp, Michele Letendre, Denise May, Kathy Meier, Susan Nielson, Diana Tavary, Arlene Templer, and Scott Trent

Absent: Wayne Dagel, Barbara Davis, Lisa Gault, Barbara Kriskovich, Frank Podobnik

Staff and others: Sheri Vukasin, Chanda Hermanson-Dudley, Bill Harant, Beverly Berg, Mike Hermanson, Jacob Kuntz, Darrel Hannum, and Shawn Tulloch. Beth Brenneman of Disability Rights Montana

Meet and Greet

Introduction of participants 10:15

Review the purpose of the Joint meeting of SILC & SRC Purpose:

- First time meeting after a long break
- SILC advocate for individuals living independently
- SRC advocate for individuals with disability to seek and keep a job
- List of representatives
- Agenda:
 - transportation of peoples with disabilities;
 - 501(3)(c);
 - accessible parking;
 - public education age to 21;
 - tobacco tax;
 - membership committee.

Statewide Independent Living Council; Monique Cassbeer

Bob Maffit of Montana Independent Living Project: Expand Transportation - voucher system through taxi system to supplement bus service in Helena. Changes in the transit system resulted in unnecessary segregation of peoples with disabilities. A lawsuit has been filed against MT Dept. of Transportation. Bozeman has a successful transportation project using the voucher system. Grants listed. Question asked regarding intrastate transportation.

Tom Osborn of North Central Independent Living - Covers approximately 50,000 square miles; financial management of CFC, and Big Sky Bonanza. Approximately 30 participants. Quarterly local leadership activities, task forces; self-determination youth programs.

Jen Cleland of Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow - Parks RX; Some similar activities as Bob and Tom.

State Rehabilitation Council; Tiffany Costa

Tiffany talked about SRC's role which is to advise the VRBS programs. There are 18 members on the Council. The Council meets four times per year. Works on an annual report to governor, review customer satisfaction as well as other activities.

Public Comments - None

Federal and State Report; Nick Domitrovich, Acting Administrator of Disability Employment and Transitions Division

Child advocacy services; Vocational and Blind Services; Disability Determination Services Bureau through Social Services Division; List of other services under this Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Federal – President appointed Mark Shultz as director of RSA, not confirmed as yet but is on the job; Six senators requested data re: sub limited wages; DOE intent to reopen VR rules; Bill introduced to amend; Housing and Urban Development introduced two bills which would require work for subsidized housing - Making Affordable Housing Work and Promoting Opportunity Work.

State – Legislative Finance committee met to handle \$2.2 million dollars requested for Extended Employment. Funds would be available June 10. No new contracts. May 24-27 meeting scheduled to discuss best practices for vocational rehab and how to work well together.

Questions/Comments:

Is there a plan in place to avoid overspending year from year? No comment on whether there is a plan in place but spending has been cut to accommodate reductions in spending. The Council has the ability to review and advice in regard to vocational rehabilitation reductions as they do now.

Approx. 280 people in Extended Employment though moneys are half available.

Things with DDS are going better than they have in many years. Applications in 2017 slowest in country. Performances are better now. New examiners have been hired; total 19 now.

Chain of command for approval – Does not go all the way to the director but they do look at every request to review for adequate services.

Counselors send service requests to administrators who bundles requests to Chandra. Nick takes a look but only to review as a peer review.

When will categories open up again? When permission is given by state. When state budget is in the black requests may be given for information on which categories to open.

Ticket to Work – used heavily. Good program and brings in heavy money. Approximately \$1.1 million for this fiscal year.

Budget Report; Sheri Vukasin, Budget Analyst Supervisor

Have not received full 2018 award as of 3/31/18. There should be an additional \$5.8 million of federal award. Federal re-allotments can be applied for. Bulk of re-allotments was sent to cover flooding, hurricanes, and

forest fires. \$4.4 million was applied for but only \$600,000 was allotted to VR. Re-allotments are a match for state funds. Re-allotments are not reported in the budget because they cannot be counted on as being awarded.

Anticipation of state matching funds is \$3.7 million dollars (23.7%) of MO (match of operations). There is a delay because of a split in the allocation of matching funds.

Supplemental monies are not reported anywhere. It is covering last year's short fall of state funds.

Windmills Training; Darrel Hannum of Havre VR and Jacob Kuntz of Kalispell VR

Windmills training is a program to educate employers about people with disabilities to get hired and stay employed.

Exercise one is A-Z Tool Company and Louis, the applicant with significant hearing loss. Discussion followed re: thoughts on how this potential employee could be helped with interview tactics as well as who was at fault during the interview process. A suggestion was made to include a list of five or so accommodations that could be included with a resume to make the candidate a successful employee.

Questions regarding additional Windmill training were asked. Darrel Hannum and Jacob Kuntz are able to train if asked.

It is noted that employers still seem to be resistant to hiring persons with disabilities because they are afraid of the words "accommodation" when it comes to perspective employees.

Open Forum and Parking Lot

Joint meeting response – Meeting was well received with a lot of information provided. It was felt that more SILC members were needed. Consensus is more joint meetings should be held in the future.

Is there a way for this council to have a better voice with the legislature? A discussion followed on how that could happen. It was noted that SIL had a lobbyist.

Tom Osbourne, Joel Pedion, Travis Hoffman are good legislative advocates in front of the legislature. A forum is needed to help people get people in front of the legislature to testify. Town Hall meetings were also suggested around the state. Possibly video meetings.

Budget cuts are affecting so many people across the state and meetings are held monthly with various groups to discuss way to help people.

SILC sends out a legislative alert whenever there is a bill affecting people with disabilities. If you can't be there in person, an email or phone call are better than nothing. Heart rending stories are good and will be read by a legislature person if you can't be there in person.

Tiffany reports that she participates in several task force meetings. Great information is provided with the task forces.