

Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
Minutes
Colorado Springs, CO
November 20, 2019

The Colorado SILC meeting was called to order by Joan LaBelle, SILC Chairperson, at 9:05 a.m. at the Colorado Springs Independent Living Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Members Present: Joan LaBelle, Chairperson; Jennifer Scilacci, Vice-Chairperson; Chris Roe, Treasurer; Louise Wilson, Secretary; Steve Heidenreich, Joe Triplett, Olivia Tonti, Charlotte Morgan, Sam Jarris, Ty Smith

New members: Staci Nichols, Martha Mason, Jessie Lorenz

Guests: Peter Pike, Sarah Hanson, Bobbie Rosa, Sadie Martinez, Dixie Herring

Opening Remarks by Chairperson:

- Introduction of SILC council members and guests
- “Thank you” to the Colorado Springs Independent Living Center for hosting the meeting.
- Ground Rules were addressed to all persons in attendance – be concise, be on topic and be nice.

Approval of Minutes: The August 21, 2019 SILC meeting minutes were presented for approval. Changes were made to the August 21, 2019 minutes. After discussion, **Sam Jarris made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Joe Triplett second the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Joan announced that Jennifer Scilacci is the committee chair for the SPIL. Also, she was voted in as the Incoming Chair of SILC. Regulations and federal guidance don't preclude or say anything about the Incoming Chair not being a voting member, but the SILC's Incoming Chair has to be a voting member, because if the chairperson is not available to chair the meetings then the Incoming Chair must run the meeting as acting Chair. Therefore, we must elect a new Incoming Chair and change the name from “Incoming Chair” to Vice-Chair. Also, she recommends that Jennifer remain Chairperson of the SPIL Committee.

Jessie made a motion to amend the by-laws to ensure that the position of Vice-Chairman is a voting member and solidify that Jennifer chair the SPIL planning committee. Sam second the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

After discussion regarding a secret ballot for the nomination of the Vice-Chairman, **Sam Jarris made a motion by acclamation to have Martha Mason appointed as the SILC Vice-Chairperson and Joe Triplett second. The motion carried unanimously.**

APRIL Conference (Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living): Joan gave an update on the conference. She indicated that the YLF youth speakers were Leo Santos, Caity Mcmanis, Libby Waechter and Evan Shockley. They talked about their life stories which was phenomenal. Carlos Santos was the lead for this workshop. The youth showcased how YLF impacted their life. Chris indicated that Joan had proposed 5 workshops which were combined into three. He indicated he took away from the conference was the Youth Leadership workshops and how youth are embracing the idea of becoming leaders in the community.

Joan, Peter and Chris presented the Transitional Leadership workshop which presented topics in transitioning leadership within Centers for Independent Living, a new DSE and a new SILC chair. Peter Pike said that Colorado was well represented. SILC should be proud of the work they have done in establishing the YLF. Joan indicated there was a lot of questions on the national level regarding DSE changes and what Colorado has done to improve their program.

There were 6 youth who were able to attend the conference with the help of a generous contributor. This conference is highly recommended for SILC members to attend. Chris indicated that it has a lot of information on rural independent living programs and Colorado has a lot of rural independent living centers. Joan is the Region 8 representative for the SILC and there is a lot of information that she would like to bring to the APRIL conference. The upcoming 2020 APRIL conference will be held in October and held in Orlando, Florida.

Charlotte indicated that she attended the APRIL Conference two years ago and it is a good place to connect with other people and programs.

Ty Smith expressed that he has worked on the Integrative State Mental Health Conference. He stated that he is interested in helping set up a local conference with his previous experience and knowledge.

SEEKS Grant: Peter Pike presented information on the Security Employment Economic Keys Stability (SEEK) grant. It is a 5-year research grant and is awarded through the Administration of Community Living and funded through the Department of Health and Human Services. There was only one (1) grant award in the Country and it was awarded to the Office of Independent Living/Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.

The aim of this grant is to remove the disparities around employment, income and educational achievement and increase community participation for people with disabilities. This is a random assigned research project which will enroll 410 participants. It will include two groups of people. One group will get the services as usual and the second group will get the interventions. This idea is showing this practice works and the purpose of this research will show evidence. The population who will be enrolled in this research project are individuals who are applying for social security disability benefits, SSDI and SSI and concurrently seeking employment. Typically, people are told that they shouldn't work because they will not be approved for benefits. Through this grant, it will demonstrate by supporting people through the application process and seeking employment at the same time is fine. This will lead toward having monthly gross income, employment and education.

The Centers for Independent Living will be delivering this intervention. Staff will be trained and will be using SSI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) which is a national program designed to increase access to the disability income benefits programs. Contacts will be made with people who are applying for SSDI, employment, comprehensive benefits counseling. It will include looking at other forms of public assistance programs that people may be receiving. If they are not initially trained in the interventions due to them not being a part of the interventions being tested, then they will be trained in year 4 of the project.

A Key element for this project is having a Stakeholder Advisory Team that will meet throughout the project. The Advisory Team will consist of the 17 organization that wrote letters to support this project as well as the voice of the population that are being serve on this grant. Representation from all the communities including age, disability type, and communities of color. There are funds in the grant to pay individuals to participate in the Advisory Committee.

There will be 11 contracts executed for this grant. They include the Centers of Independent Living, Groups who will be doing the training on the topics, Research Evaluator and the University of Colorado. Since this is a people's program, enrollment in the program is by Informed choice and information needs to be documented.

Jessie congratulated Peter on this grant and thought it was amazing. She did have a question regarding the ticket to work as a part of their enrollment in the program.

Joe congratulated Peter on the project but wanted to make sure that dealing with disabilities there are two types, Blind (Visual Impaired) and people with disabilities. The SDA is different, and qualifications are somewhat different. As they are being employed, make sure they are making more than their benefits, or they will have to pay back to SSA.

Ty Smith indicated there are some people who have never worked in their life due to their disability. He wanted to know if the project was designed to work with people who are applying and helping them seek employment. Joan indicated that he should get on the Advisory Board to address this issue.

Charlotte gave her congratulations and was excited about the project. She would like to have a voice both on a personal and professional level. She does have the experience in working with human service programs.

Bobbie Rosa indicated that she would like to have the two Ute Tribes reached out to be a part of this grant. The Ute tribes are in a rural area of the state.

Peter indicated this project will go before a Review board before it begins. He will keep SILC updated on the project.

SILC ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

Joan stated that Charlotte needed every SILC member fill out the sheet to get updated information list of members names, city and county along with the term that they are serving. Charlotte indicated SILC members need to add their term expiration date. She will email the SILC membership so they can send in their information. Joe would like to have an updated list to be send out to all members by email.

501.c3 Status: The SILC has hired a CPA to complete the applications for the SILC too become a non-profit that Joan and Chris began. It is expected state approval will happen soon. An application will be submitted to the IRS to become a 501c3 non-profit once that is complete.

The SILC is working on hiring a staff member that will act as director. The first priority will be to coordinate the YLF.

CHANGES TO BY-LAWS, ADD PERSONNEL COMMITTEE AND LANGUAGE TO COINCIDE WITH EXECUTIVE ORDER

Joan proposed an implementation of a standing committee called the Personnel Committee. This committee will handle personnel issues. After discussion, **Sam made a motion to add a personnel committee to the SILC By-laws. Charlotte seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.**

Joan provided an update on the new Executive Order that will be signed by the Governor this year re-implementing the SILC in Colorado.

Discussion was held about increasing the size of the SILC to handle the duties once the SILC becomes a non-profit.

Jessie asked about the salary of the Executive Director and if the allocation is in the budget in case of an Administration of Community Living (ACL) audit. Chris replied there is \$70,000 available in the budget; \$60,000 for administrative support and \$10,000 for accounting.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Executive: The SILC By-laws states that the Executive committee is made up of 4 officers and the 6 committee chairmen. Discussion was held on whether this was too large. Past Executive Committees were limited to the 4 officers. After discussion, the SILC decided to maintain the Executive Committee at its current size.

Finance: Chris gave his update on the approved budget, cash on hand and the expense highlights. He presented a report that he created but wants to change the outlook of the report. He stated that the Fiscal year begins on July 1st. We are 50% through our fiscal year. Questions were presented regarding interpreters for the meetings, salary for executive director, and expenses for quarterly SILC meetings. The larger expenses were the travel to APRIL conference. Other expenses were low.

Membership: Charlotte indicated that she would like to thank the membership for their cooperation in filling out all the required updated information. She congratulated all the new members and reappointed members to SILC. The membership committee will be conducting an interview on February 5th for Kara who has applied to take Adam Tucker's position. The committee is looking at different ways to do the orientation for new members.

Public Policy: Jessie volunteered to chair the Public Policy Committee. Update on the proposed state legislation that is currently in the works. Key items are:

- Eliminating sub-minimum wage in the State by 2025
- Reauthorizing Employment First into the future
- State hiring preference for people with disabilities
- Extending the RISP rural ASL interpreting project

Statewide Plan for Independent Living (SPIL): Jennifer gave an update on where we are with the plan and some of the sub-committees.

Youth: Jennifer talked about the YLF Alumni Committee, the Stakeholder Committee, the Youth Intern spot that is open, and additional YLF updates.

Communication: Sam indicated that he is working on getting the SILC calendar updated with all the latest changes.

LUNCH: Lunch was provided by the Independent Living Center. The program supervisors gave a highlight of their programs within the Colorado Springs

Independent Living Center. They gave out information on their programs to the SILC membership.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Stacey Nickols talked about the needs of the Independent Living Centers in rural areas of Colorado.

SILC TRAINING: Danny McCarthy, the ACCIL's contracted lobbyist with Mendez Consulting, gave an update on the YLF bill as an example of how bills are processed.

- Sen. Zenzinger sponsored the bill
- The bill is drafted
- Introduced in the House
 - Assigned a number
 - Assigned to committee
 - Presentation
 - Committee vote
 - 2nd reading to entire Chamber with questions and comments
 - Voice vote
 - Time goes by
 - 3rd reading with recorded vote
- Goes to Senate committee
 - 2nd hearing, etc....
- Goes to Governor for signature

CENTER UPDATES:

Joan: DRS is hiring a Director of Employment.

Martha: Hiring a Benefits Coordinator to help with SSA and SSI services; Southwest Rides providing driver assistance rides to people with disabilities, those who are aging, and Veterans; Nursing Transition position recently filled; there was a recent break-in to SWCI and was out of their office until it was renovated. The homeless needs assistance in the area.

Ian: Update on the transportation grant from state. Also, he gave an update on the people with disabilities and what it is like to live in Colorado and using public services.

COORDINATING ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER STATE ENTITIES

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL: Jennifer gave an update on the Employment First and the Competitive Integrated Employment which is customized employment and workplace support to meet the specific abilities of the disabled individual as well as the business needs of the employer. People with disabilities rights to employment in places where they work alongside others with disabilities and those without disabilities.

Wages need to be at least minimum wage and that are competitive with others in similar positions

DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION: Jennifer talked about changes in the structural organization of the Department.

HEALTH CARE POLICY AND FINANCE: Adam Tucker has resigned his position and Kara will be applying to replace him. An update was given regarding training in rural areas for supervisors and employees. The increase in employment for people on Medicare has been up 11%. Adam talked about the training and certification now required through the Office of Employment First. Funds are available to reimburse agencies getting staff trained.

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT: Sarah Hanson gave an update on how to complete the Travel Reimbursement Form. Travel needs to be completed within 60 days for reimbursement. Along with the travel form, travelers must provide a copy of their travel map.

CLOSING REMARKS: Chris Roe indicated that Joan did a great job in chairing this meeting. Joan stated that the "Smooth as SILC" training is forthcoming. It will be done by Bob Williams this time, for \$75 per person for a three-week class with 21 hours of homework.

A motion was made by Sam Jarris to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Joe Triplet. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

_____ Concurred: _____
Louise Wilson, Secretary, SILC Joan LaBelle, Chairperson, SILC

