

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL**  
**March 24, 2020**  
**Conference Call**

Face to face meeting was rescheduled by conference call due to the Coronavirus disease 2019/COVID 19 outbreak.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Craig Eschenbaum, Patty Kuglitsch, Ronda Williams, Mark Sternhagen, Kyrsten Zimmerman, Eric Weiss, Alan Adel, Jackie Juhala, Catherine Greseth and Jen Red Bear. **MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ben Wolf Necklace, Syndee Jundt, Dave Scherer, Tasha Jones, Kathy Rutten, and Mark Koterwski. **OTHERS PRESENT:** Matt Cain, Jennifer Lewis, Gloria Pluimer and Colette Wagoner.

**OPENING ACTIONS:** Welcome and Introductions: Craig called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. He welcomed all and asked them to introduce themselves. REVIEW OF VOTING PROCESS: Craig reminded members that any items requiring action that voting would be taken by roll call. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Craig asked if there were any changes to the agenda. The organizational funding request received from the Transition Services Liaison Project in support of the 2020 Youth Leadership Forum was added under "Other Business". **MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS CHANGED, MADE (M), SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C).** YEAS – Jackie, Kyrsten, Catherine, Mark, Alan, Patty and Jen; NAYS - None. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2019 MINUTES – Craig asked for any changes to the draft December minutes; staff brought forward several edits, **MOTION TO APPROVE DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES AS CHANGED, MSC.** YEAS – Jackie, Kyrsten, Catherine, Mark, Alan, Patty and Jen; NAYS - None. APPROVAL OF MAY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES – Craig called for any changes to the draft February minutes from the Executive Committee meeting. Hearing none – **MOTION TO APPROVE – MSC.** YEAS – Jackie, Kyrsten, Catherine, Mark, Alan, Patty and Jen; NAYS - None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Craig asked if there was any need for the SILC to hold an executive session. Hearing none, he moved the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** At this time, Craig invited public comments. None were brought forward, so he again moved to the agenda.

**STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING:** Eric outlined Title VII, Chapter 1 of the Rehabilitation Act, establishing independent living services and Centers for Independent Living programs. The Independent Living Services Program makes funding available to states for providing, expanding and improving the provision of IL

services. A state needs to submit an approvable three year State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) to receive funding. The SILC is responsible for developing the SPIL after receiving public input. The SPIL contains narrative sections describing IL objectives, services, activities, and operational details as well as assurances. The SPIL workgroup has met four times to work on content of the SPIL. Workgroup members include Craig, Patty, Mark S, Alan, Jen, Eric, Matt, Jennifer and Colette. The SPIL requires signatures from the SILC Chairperson, Designated State Entity (Division of Rehabilitation Services Director) and both Centers for Independent Living directors (Jen Red Bear and Matt Cain) prior to submission. Different methods of obtaining public input was discussed. A survey was disseminated in February to obtain feedback on IL services from individuals with disabilities in the state. The survey was closed March 6 and information will be shared once results are compiled. A public forum is scheduled for April 1, originally arranged via DDN/video conference, but was changed to conference call only due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Everyone was encouraged to participate in this meeting and to share information with others about the forum. Written comment will be accepted as well. The SPIL outlines goals, objectives and activities and who is responsible for carrying out the activities. Members and CIL directors were encouraged to read thru this information as all the partners are responsible to carry out these activities. The draft SPIL document was disseminated to the SILC for review prior to the meeting, as well as information added to the Division's website for the public's review and comment. Eric encouraged members and others to attend the SPIL public forum and extended a thank you to workgroup for their time, input and participation.

**CIL UPDATES:** Western Resources for Independent Living (WRIL): Jen reported that WRIL's Security Deposit Assistance Program Grant application was approved by the South Dakota Housing Development Authority. This is at a standstill now due COVID 19. Staff were busy with the HMAD program up through last week. WRIL offices are closed to the public; staff are utilizing phone/email to stay connected with individuals. There are no home visits or office visits. WRIL is working on a plan to provide services as best as they can during the COVID 19 outbreak. In response to a question, Jen reported that staff are unable to access their case data management system from home or remotely at this time, but they are maintaining contact with individuals with cell phones. Staff in the Pierre office is able to go to work, as she is the only person working out of this office whereas the Rapid City office is more complicated as there are other renters utilizing the building space. WRIL is advertising for a full time ILS position in Spearfish, as the caseload size has doubled in this area.

Independent Living Choices (ILC) South, North and Native American:

Matt explained ILC is continuing to provide services as best they can. ILC is looking at offering peer support services via alternative means for individuals to meet e.g., Skype, Facebook live videos, Zoom, as this seems to be a critical need at this time. The office is open for all staff at this point, no foot traffic, no out of office appointments, and things could become more stringent. Matt explained that the travel restrictions posed by different Tribal Nations has created difficulty as well. Staff were only allowed to travel on Pine Ridge. Referrals are down about 50%. He explained that staff have tablets/laptops and they can access their case management services system outside of the office.

**DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES REPORT:** Jennifer provided this report and noted that members received this information prior to the meeting.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey Report: The reporting period was June 1, 2019 - November 2019, with a response rate of 30%. Comments reflect majority of participants happy with services, with staff, and explanation of services. Comments from some individuals noted it was hard to find the help they needed, lack of knowledge of agencies that could help. Jennifer referred to the State Plan and goals/objectives that validate the need of increasing awareness and access to IL services.

Status of CIL Contracts: reporting period for June 2019 – January 2020, shows funds each CIL receives from the Administration of Community Living as Part C funds and funds through the Division's contracts. The report reflects each CIL on track to expend all funds in contracts. A question was asked if a CIL expends all dollars, what happens. Eric's response was state contract dollars should be budgeted for the entire period of the contract; each CIL's budget is reviewed with given consideration to Part C funds and HMAD funds. In terms of growing the program and providing additional services, CILs can raise monies through other means e.g., fundraising efforts.

Independent Living Funding Sources: members received a one-page handout showing the sources and levels of funding that the CILs receive. A question was asked if a CIL does not expend all funds due to COVID 19, what happens to those funds. Part B funds can be carried over, funds will not be reverted. Another question was raised about not expending contract dollars due to COVID 19, inability to expend all HMAD funds and other services, what will happen with these funds, will some consideration be given to dollars/carryover. Eric referred to the contracts having multiple funding sources (Part B, HMAD funds) and the need for continued communication between the Division and each CIL especially in these unknown times, what may come, and not knowing how the provision of services will continue. Other challenges include keeping staff working at 100% and trying to identify creative ways to provide needed services to individuals with disabilities.

Discussion of the bands limiting travel on the reservations. Matt explained that it is different with each nation. Pine Ridge was allowing staff to travel this territory as well as provide ramps through the HMAD program. Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and

Standing Rock did not want any ILS staff traveling or coming into individuals' homes, which started earlier in March. A question was asked about referrals/taking new applications, and the response was that CIL staff are trying to do this remotely as much as they can. Matt stated that during the month of February, ILC had 160 referrals compared to receiving only eight referrals in the last two weeks. COVID 19 has changed the landscape dramatically. The need remains, a change or shift has come e.g., application for SSI/SSDI, an area that ILS staff can assist individuals with disabilities with navigating. CIL Quarterly Reports: these reports provide information on progress on the SPIL goals providing a summary of descriptions of events or activities that CILs have participated in or conducted. These reports will need to be updated once the new SPIL is approved.

## **BREAK**

**BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BVR) REPORT:** Eric thanked everyone for his or her participation and making schedule adjustments to accommodate this meeting. The BVR met on March 5 in Rapid City at the local VR office. Agenda items included presentations from Project SEARCH staff and a student, Career Learning Center of the Black Hills/Adult Students with Disabilities, Western Diversity Network of the Black Hills and DakotaLink. Moving the meeting around the state allows members to meet with different providers and learn more about programs/services. Other standing agenda items included updates on the SILC, Governor's Awards, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). The next meeting will be held in either Sioux Falls or Pierre. The BVR is seeking nominations to fill pending vacancies as four members are terming off. If you know of interested individuals encourage them to apply, as the nomination information is available.

**DIVISION OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (SBVI) REPORT:** Ronda reported that SBVI staff (VR counselors, IL specialists, rehabilitation teachers) are working from home utilizing cell phones, laptops to continue providing services. A case file review is scheduled May 4-6 and will be conducted remotely as case files can be reviewed electronically vs. staff traveling to Pierre and meeting in person. Staff training will be held July 28-30 in Aberdeen. This will include a tour of the School for the Blind, Visually Impaired, and meeting the superintendent. A VR counselor vacancy was recently filled in the Sioux Falls office. Staff from the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and the Orientation and Mobility specialists are working from home, doing on line training, working on presentations/curriculum. Chelle Hart, a rehabilitation teacher in Sioux Falls is retiring after 30 years of service and her position has been announced. Department

of Human Services (DHS) staff are also working in the State's Emergency Operations Center in Pierre that is open 7 days a week.

**SILC SOLICITATION FOR NOMINATIONS:** Colette reported that the current SILC configuration has two members who will term off at the end of June. Four members' terms expire, and they are eligible to serve an additional term, if appointed. Of the four members, two members are not able to continue due to their workload. The solicitation for Board and SILC nominations was disseminated February 14 with a due date of April 10. To date four nominations have been received. CILs were encouraged to think of possible individuals that have received IL services and would be interested in serving in this type of capacity. Questions were asked about reimbursement for SILC members and whether an attendant or driver receives reimbursement. It was explained that if a member requires these types of services in order to participate, that reimbursement could include per diem (meals, lodging and travel expenses) in addition to personal attendant and driver fees.

**GOVERNOR'S AWARDS NOMINATIONS:** Colette reported that the draft nomination packet for the Governor's Awards was sent to a workgroup for review. The nomination packet recruits for five award categories. The workgroup is comprised of BVR, BSBVI and SILC members. The nomination packet was disseminated March 20 via hard mail and electronically, along with an issued press release from the Governor's office. The Division has a link to the information on the website. This information was forwarded individuals with disabilities, family members, disability related organizations and service providers (e.g., Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, Center for Disabilities, Disability Rights SD, SD Association of the Deaf, SD Parent Connection, Council on DD) inviting them to share the information. Nominations are due May 1. Members were encouraged to utilize these award categories to highlight and uplift individuals with disabilities and employers who have hired people with disabilities.

**BOARD OF SBVI REPORT:** Catherine reported that the Board met on March 13 in Pierre. Time was spent reviewing the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan, and two video conferences were held to obtain public input on the draft document. The State Plan was submitted on February 28 and now the Division is waiting for RSA's review and approval. The Division is working with the Bureau of Information and Technology to work with the R911 reporting system utilized by the VR agencies to align data reporting requirements with the Department of Labor and Regulation. The Board's public relations committee is working on outreach activities to provide information on diabetes, blindness and related services. The Board has members who are participating on the Governor's Awards workgroup. At the last meeting, the Board approved funding in the amount of \$5,000

for NDEAM events. The Board had representation during Disability Awareness Day at the capital. Business Enterprise Program has vendor contracts in federal buildings and roadside rest stops, which are experiencing less business due to the COVID 19. Nominations are being sought to fill one vacancy for the Board. The National Federation of the Blind Convention was scheduled in April and has been postponed to November. The SD Association of the Blind is hosting a meeting in Aberdeen in September. The next meeting will be held June 5.

**NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH:** Colette reported that a workgroup of BVR, BSBVI and SILC representatives reviewed 12 community requests for funding to conduct NDEAM events. Total requested funds equaled \$30,455.64. The proposals outlined match of financial support or in-kind support of \$30,450. Workgroup comments consisted of partnerships/stakeholders are solid and growing; events are being valued by other entities lending support (i.e., hotels donating meeting room space), and there is an increase in communities coordinating events and resources. The workgroup recommended that all 12 communities be fully funded. The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation approved the workgroup's funding recommendation and the Board of SBVI approved up to \$5,000 in financial support. In response to a question, it was reported that the SILC has provided financial support to these events in the past. Discussion of the SILC offering up to \$2,000 in support of the events. Mark stated that with the COVID 19 pandemic, and the upcoming 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADA that it is more important now to speak to the abilities and talents of people with disabilities and uplift these types of events.

**MOTION MADE TO APPROVE \$5,000 TO SUPPORT THE 2020 NDEAM EVENTS, MSC.** YEAS – Jackie, Kyrsten, Catherine, Mark, Patty and Jen; NAYS - Alan.

**WORKGROUP REPORTS:** Consumer Services Workgroup: Ronda reported that work started last summer on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ILC and WRIL to establish procedures, streamline and collaborate in the provision of statewide independent living services. In addition to the MOU, the workgroup created a "Centers for Independent Living Referral Form, DHS-IL-315" and an "Authorization of IL Client Choice" form. The workgroup included CIL staff, as well as providing each center director the opportunity to provide input in the development of the forms. The forms were sent to members in their packets prior to the meeting. Ronda reviewed the forms in detail. The forms highlight consumer choice of which CIL to provide services, which may be a CIL outside their specific geographic area, in addition to the CIL providing the services and understanding that transportation time beyond the designated territory will not be billed or paid. Language is also included that a CIL has the ability to decline service provision if it is not cost effective or would be a hardship for staffing purposes. The CILs are committed to working together to make sure all people in need will receive services. Matt stated he shared

the forms with staff and received positive comments. He noted it would be very good to have this in place, especially for the areas that border between the centers. There was no further discussion or questions, **MOTION TO APPROVE THE DOCUMENTS AS PRESENTED – THE MOU BETWEEN ILC AND WRIL, AUTHORIZATION OF IL CLIENT CHOICE, AND THE CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING REFERRAL FORM (DHS-IL 315), MSC.** YEAS – Jackie, Kyrsten, Catherine, Mark, Alan, Patty and Jen; NAYS - None.

Public Awareness /Outreach Workgroup: Catherine spoke about the Champion of IL awards and working with Sandy Neyhart (former SILC member) and Craig on this workgroup. She explained the purpose of the awards are to bring awareness and recognition of IL services, i.e., individuals with disabilities achieving IL goals/living as independently as they choose, entities or organizations providing excellent services, and to raise awareness about the SILC. She talked about the timeline utilized previously with dissemination and due date of nominations, review/selection of award recipient(s) and hosting an event to present the award. She encouraged the SILC to utilize what is happening across the state in terms of the COVID 19 to recognize individuals or organizations going above and beyond to provide assistance in terms of independent living needs/services. Suggestions were made to recognize award recipients during the fall meeting (host the SILC meeting in this area). Catherine asked for volunteers to serve on the workgroup. Kyrsten agreed to work on the workgroup with Craig and Catie. It was suggested that Matt and Jen review the nomination form and provide guidance/assistance with dissemination. A question was asked about SILC workgroups and who serves on which group; a request was made for staff to forward the workgroups/membership listing to members for review and to identify which committee they could serve on.

Advocacy/Interagency Collaboration Workgroup: Colette reported on Tasha's behalf. There was no update from the Department of Transportation (DOT) at this point, there seemed to a misunderstanding of information regarding DOT's survey sent out last year. Tasha agreed to review DOT's website and links e.g., 2020-2023 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to identify information/survey results. There was nothing else to report at this time.

Assistive Technology/Home Modifications Assistive Devices Workgroup: Craig reported in Dave's absence that this committee has not met, therefore had nothing to report.

**SILC BYLAWS:** Craig opened up this topic for discussion. Alan explained in reviewing SILC related information he discovered there was no Bylaw committee or workgroup established. He suggested establishing a bylaw workgroup to review the

bylaws at least annually would be good business practice. There was agreement to do so. Staff agreed to identify the SILC Bylaws and forward to members. Alan also suggested the need for a workgroup to review the SPIL's goals and objectives once it is approved. Staff will forward the SILC Workgroups/Membership listing to allow members to review it and identify which workgroup they would like serve on.

**MOTION TO SET UP TWO WORKGROUPS (BYLAWS AND STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING) TO ALLOW FOR REVIEW OF SILC RELATED INFORMATION AT LEAST ANNUALLY, MSC.** YEAS – Jackie, Kyrsten, Catherine, Mark, Alan, Patty and Jen; NAYS - None. Further discussion to include “Bylaws” on the next meeting agenda.

**SILC POLICY/LANGUAGE CLEANUP – “A PROCESS TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS AND MEET REGULARLY AS PRESCRIBED IN 45 CFR 1329.15 (a) (3) and for the Public to Request Reasonable Accommodations to Participate During a Public Council Meeting”.** Colette explained that this policy was adopted at the June 2019 meeting. Current language in the policy refers to the address of the Coalition, which is the former entity that provided staff support. A change was suggested to remove language outlining the Coalition, and the sentence would read, “It is also posted at the office of the SD Department of Human Services and the agency which provides staff support to the SILC. This will keep the policy current with any entity providing the staff support. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE POLICY WITH THE PROPOSED CHANGE, MSC.** YEAS – Jackie, Kyrsten, Catherine, Mark, Alan, Patty and Jen; NAYS - None.

**CHAMPION OF IL AWARDS:** Discussion on the awards and the timelines continued and the need to adjust this if it is to be continued. There is a need to generate more knowledge and interest to obtain more nominations. A question was asked about utilizing other outlets to get the word out on the awards. Social media could be utilized i.e., press release, websites, etc. Utilize SILC/CIL staff in addition to SILC members to spread awareness and information. Consensus to keep the awards in place, conduct a broader solicitation process, have nominations due in June and recognize recipient(s) during the fall meeting.

**SILC BUDGET:** Staff was asked to forward the SILC's budget report following the last Executive Committee meeting. The budget line items and amounts were reviewed. Alan spoke to the CIL staff training line item and wanted to direct CIL director's attention to this item. He wanted to ensure that the CILs are taking advantage of it. In the past, SILC staff organized a CIL staff training in April with various training topics presented. Training topics were identified by CIL staff. Last year, the CIL's choose to send staff to the Division's Fall Conference which offered separate training tracks to include IL topics.



**OTHER BUSINESS:** BHSSC/Transition Services Liaison Project submitted an organizational funding request for \$2,000 to support the 2020 Youth Leadership Forum. These funds would support the costs of mentor and team leader fees.

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE BHSSC/TRANSITION SERVICES LIAISON PROJECT ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDING REQUEST IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,000 FOR THE 2020 YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM, MSC.** YEAS – Jackie, Kyrsten, Catherine, Mark, Alan, Patty and Jen; NAYS - None. Catie asked to return to the Public Awareness/Outreach committee. She asked about the status of the SILC brochure. She agreed to send this to the full SILC. She also inquired about other SILC information, i.e., website. There is a SILC page under the Division’s website page. She was wondering in terms of working with the Job Accommodation Network staff in reviewing information. Catie will forward the draft brochure to Eric and Colette.

**CLOSING ACTIONS:** Future Agenda Items: Election of Officers; Bylaws, DakotaLink, and SPIL. Schedule Next Meeting: Staff will distribute a doodle poll in a couple of weeks to members to ascertain meeting date/location. Adjournment:

**MOTION TO ADJOURN – MS.** Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00/noon.