Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

MINUTES

The Statewide Independent Living Council held a meeting on February 6th and 7th , 2020 at American Red Cross Building, 4655 Sherwood Common Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA. Chairperson Danny Cottonham, presided.

Present:

1. Ainsworth, Jamie(Day 1,2)
2. Baker, Kandy (Day 1,2)
3. Bristo, Rashad (Day1, 2)
4. Cochran, Jay(Day 1,2)
5. Cottonham, Danny(Day 1,2)
6. Duplechine, Jamie(Day 1,2)
7. Egle, Jill(Day 1,2)
8. Fuselier, Rocky (Day 1,2)
9. Geddes, Sharon (Day 1,2)
10. Gray, Anita (Day 2)
11. Granger, Mitch(Day 1,2)
12. Guillory, Michelle (Day 1,2)
13. Hennessey, Sharron(Day 1,2)
14. Morales, Rosemary (Day 1,2)
15. Nguyen, Steven (Day 1,2)
16. Polotzola, Bambi (Day 1 ,2)
17. Taylor, Erick (Day 1,2)
18. Viltz, Rosezella (Day 1,2)

Absent:

1. Harrell, Antoinette(Day1, 2)
2. Cochran, Jay(Day 1,2)

SILC Staff Present

1. Lewis, Jessica

Guest:

1. Gale Dean
2. April Dunn
3. Melissa Bayham
4. Alisha Garson
5. Melanie Washington
6. Erick DSW
7. Jamie DSW

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

SILC Vice- Chairperson, Rashad B., called the meeting to order at 1:15PM, and asked everyone to briefly introduce him or herself. Rashad asked Jessica Lewis to call roll to determine if a quorum is present. A quorum was present.

MISSION STATEMENT

The SILC read the council’s Mission Statement. Danny Cottonham informed members to adhere to the ground rules.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Danny Cottonham asked members to review the agenda for any corrections. Corrections were documented by the Director. Steven N. motioned, and Erick T. seconded to approve the agenda. There were no objections and the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

The council reviewed the minutes from November 7th and 8th ,2019. There was a motion to approve the minutes by Erick T. and seconded by Rosezella V. There was no opposition and the minutes were approved.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

The SILC Director’s Report was given for November 1 to January 31. In regards to membership the SILC will be voting on new member’s tomorrow and the EO has changed. Will now have someone from LHC, VETs, OBH and taking off GODA. The ED discussed the goal of more Advocacy this year and what does that look like for us? Also how can SILC be present more? The discussion went on to ask what do we want to put on our legislative, and it was stated from the SILC to focus on SPAS, Community Choice Waiver, accessible parking and supported decision making. Discussion took place regarding these topics. Housing will come later in the future. The ED produced a flyer regarding parking in handicapped parking with ramps. The SILC liked the flyer over all but suggested some changes. After the changes have been made, send out to entire SILC to print and handout. The EO stated Danny and Rosezella will be attending SILC Congress. And looking forward to the information that will come from this conference. The SPIL committee is currently working on the SPIL and will have something for the entire council in May. The ED suggested for the SILC to start thinking about the Job fair and Gala planning. Also, an REVUP and emergency prep committee has been established with programs to come. Now a part of the NCIL and can take part in committees.

BUDGET UPDATE

Jessica went over the budget given from the fiscal office. Handout was given. Jessica will email final once she gets it.

Danny acknowledgment Bambi kidney surgery and Jessica Engagement.

SPIL GOAL# 3: Objective 2: Activity 2: Continue partnering with other CILs and disability-related organizations to foster best practices.

Update from GODA

Bambi gave an update for GODA. GODA conference will be on July 23rd and 24th this year and will involve activities around the ADA 30th anniversary. Please submit ideas. Suggested doing a march and invite Gorge W. Bush. Currently re-constructing GACDA and changing the EO to more advocacy based. GACDA Legislative committee meet in January and focused on SPAS, Community Choice Waiver, accessible parking, supported, decision making and the assessable parking app. An explanation of supported decision making was stated for understanding. Rep Foil and Sen. Davis is on board. The Advocacy center will ask for more funds this session for SILAP program. They are Now receiving 75k in appropriation and 75k in state match but want to 150k to expand to 4 regions. Looking to find and/or create legislation to put SAME in law so it will not leave with EO after Governor term ends. Session starts March 9th to June 1st. Also stated a lot of new legislators and everyone need to reach out.

Update from LRS

LRS is still operating under an Order of Selection. OOS 1-4 remain open and OOS 5 remains closed; however, we do not have any participants currently on the waiting list. For Program Year 2019, LRS has closed 737 participants successfully into employment. LRS is participating in the VOICE technical assistance grant that is being led by Bambi Polotzola from the Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs and Dr. Ashley Jefferson from the Office of Behavioral Health. Our target areas are improving employment services for individuals with serious mental illness and expanding the work of the State as a Model Employer taskforce. All IL Part B funds are available now for FFY 2020. The IL award is $338,717 for FY 2020, which is the same amount as the award for FFY 2019. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the civilian Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Update from Elderly Affairs- Michele Guillory

Updates from OCDD- Rosemary Morales

Still doing screens for OCDD services and have around 600 slots available. Regarding employment, they now offering an online training in partnership with the DD Council regarding supported employment. Working on community based service rule transition plan.

SPIL GOAL #1: Objective 1: Activity 1: CILs provide updates at each SILC meeting

Update from @Southwest Louisiana Independence Center (@SLIC)-Mitch

Recent Events @SLIC

* Hosted Consumer Holiday Events
  + Halloween Costume Party. Consumers were able to dress in costume, play games and win prizes. @SLIC staff participated in an office wide door decorating contest. Consumers voted on the best door determining the winner.
  + Big Christmas Bash. @SLIC threw an exciting celebration for the Christmas Holiday. Food, Christmas music, games and presents were provided for consumers. There was a large turnout and everyone had a great time celebrating this holiday. The door decorating contest was continued for Christmas theme and consumers voted for their favorite department choice.
* Survey results for Independent Living Services have been collected. All surveys reflect services provided as “excellent” or “good” with no poor ratings.
* Youth Vocational Transition Services/ Pre-ETS.
  + Pre-Employment Transition Services are provided to students through a contract with LRS. Using an approved curriculum, students are taught skills/lessons to help them prepare for their transition to work or secondary education.
  + @SLIC recently enrolled an additional school in the Pre-Employment Transition Services program raising our number to seven schools with eleven students participating.
* New program for Interpreting/Communication
  + Services-Service Support Provider (SSP). @SLIC will contract with Louisiana Commission for the Deaf for SSP. This program is geared to assist individuals that are losing their vision and Hard of Hearing with communicating. This could be tasks such as reading a person’s mail, taking the individual into the community, or even the purchase of a needed device to better help the individual communicate. The service is scheduled “as needed”.
* An application was completed in January for a Technology Grant. If awarded, the funds will be used to purchase technology to help streamline services, increase efficiency and productivity. In addition, the devices will help our agency become “green” thereby reducing usage of paper and cutting down on waste. @SLIC also intends to utilize the technology for training, implementing them for use in caregiver orientation and in the classroom with transition students.
* @SLIC is currently “focus grouping” with Deaf/Hard of Hearing consumers regarding the need for a safety device (strobe light smoke detector). If a need is established, the goal would be to attain a grant to assistance these consumers with this safety need.
* Continued progress with Hearing Aid Program through Louisiana Commission for the Deaf. @SLIC has been serving participants efficiently, with quickly turnover and less time on the waiting list.
* Equipment Purchase with donated funds.
  + IL Specialist recently completed a purchase of medical items to include wheelchairs and shower benches. These items will be donated to individuals in need within the community.
* Recognition for Direct Service Workers.
  + Quarterly Awards are given to caregivers for job recognition and appreciation.
* Continued outreach within community to include participation in resource fairs, community networks, etc.
  + Independent Living staff was just featured on a live radio station sharing information on @SLIC’s service and programs. @SLIC continues to manage a Facebook page sharing useful information, upcoming events, trainings, and resources with the community.
* On Jan. 16th our Lafayette office teamed up with Acadiana Rebuilds Together to help make repairs to a disabled person’s home that was flooded. Multiple staff from the office go to help out.

\*See attached document for a list of additional Outreach.

* Upcoming Events/ Programs
  + Community Dance- A Night to Shine. @SLIC consumers will join other individuals with disabilities in the community for a formal dance in Lake Charles. This is an annual event consumers enjoy.

Update from New Horizons Independent Living Center (NHILC) –Gale Dean

In December, New Horizons submitted our annual Program Performance Report/704 to the Administration for Community Living. The Centers for Independent Living are required to share the report with the SILC. Therefore, I am passing around a copy of our report for review by members of the SILC. It should be noted in this meeting’s minutes that we shared the PPR/704 with the SILC. As the report is 55 pages, we did not make individual copies for everyone.

New Horizons continues to serve as the fiscal agent for the Statewide Independent Living Council. The current balance of the funds remains the same as last meeting. The balance is $2850.

In January, we submitted a Letter of Intent to the Beaird Family Foundation headquartered in Shreveport. Our Letter of Intent was for funding to develop an accessible website which will improve access to information on our website for individuals who are blind, have low vision, have hearing loss or are deaf, and for individuals with motor impairment. We are excited that our Letter of Intent was accepted. The full grant was due today. So the full grant has already been submitted.

It will be May before we know whether or not our project will be funded by the Foundation. However, we recognize the importance of this project, as it could potentially provide access to individuals worldwide. We have currently been updating our website monthly under the tab NEWS HORIZONS, as this is part of our annual work plan. We hope to have a totally new design and to be able to include more news for the disability community. We invite members of the Council to check our website for updates each month. If our accessible website project is not approved by the Foundation, we are planning to have a specific fundraiser to complete the project. (We might have to pass around our DipJar.) Our Facebook page will undergo some changes and the web developers have already started on that part. You can currently find us on Facebook at NEW HORIZONS LIVING. We’re not sure if that will be the final page title.

We have just completed some updates to our Ticket to Work program, which provides employment supports to people with disabilities. In the past two years, we have provided services to individuals in Louisiana and the state of Iowa. We are now listed as a nationwide Ticket to Work Employment Network. Our first calls have been from Texas. Our Ticket program serves as alternate funding for the Center, which is required by the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

New Horizons Shreveport had participants in the public hearing for the State Plan for Independent Living. The primary concerns focused on affordable, accessible housing. Someone suggested that the Centers for Independent Living should be involved in giving out housing vouchers. We are currently exploring this idea with the City of Shreveport and Bossier City. We feel that accessible, affordable housing should be included as an objective in the State Plan currently being developed.

Our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program is well underway. We actually began mid-January meeting with consumers and completing tax returns so that they would be ready when the IRS opened the season on January 27. We currently have four VITA volunteers all certified by the IRS at the advanced level.

We have just received a sponsorship from Louisiana Healthcare Connections for $1000. We have had two other donations specifically for VITA. One was $100 from Riverbend Rotary Club and the second was a case of paper from BanCorp South. In addition, we are taking a leadership role in our area VITA sites, including some from Minden, Natchitoches, and Shreveport, in writing a federal grant which would help with next year’s tax season. That grant is due in May.

I am looking forward to SILC Congress this year in San Diego. This will be my 5th opportunity to attend the Congress. It’s educational and great networking!

Speaking of California, New Horizons was listed in the Los Angeles Times as having signed as a part of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. You are welcome to find our listing.

New Business

Discussion regarding accessible perking at RIL and what to do regarding the issues at hand. The issues are no visible ramp in front of the building, faded parking strips, faded accessible parking signs and the entrance of the building has limited line of sight. A description was stated of the issues from Anita G. the SILC suggested that the Chair draft a letter on behave of the SILC regarding the issues that the RIL building is having and submit to the building owner. RIL will send the Landlord information to the ED. Recommend the Advocacy Center be copied on this letter. Motion by Erick and seconded by Rosezella to create this letter.

4:00pm Recess

DAY 2

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called back to order at 9:15AM by Danny Cottonham and Jessica called roll again to establish if a quorum was present. The Chair reiterated the ground rules as a reminder.

Voting on new members

New members were voted on by ballots and documentation of the voting numbers were documented in SILC files.

Per the new EO draft, these persons have been proposed by SILC to be appointed once the new EO is in place.

1. Welma Jackson
2. Charlene Gradney
3. Denisa Joshua

These are the persons recommended for immediate appointment for SILC current vacancies.

1. Stephen Whitlow
2. Jarrod Bottley

These persons would need to be appointed after April 10th once Jay Cochran and Sharron Geddes term expires.

1. Esther Marshal Jett
2. Shaely Cheramie

SPIL GOAL #1: Objective 1: Activity 2: Ongoing orientation of SILC members through sharing effective resources and services of each Council member

Jessica reminded everyone to do orientation and ethics training to stay in compliance.

SPIL GOAL #1: Objective 1: Activity 5: SILC members provide updates on activities/events occurring in each member's local community that are opportunities for dissemination of IL philosophy and services

Steven stated that March 28th 10am to 2pm FHF is hosting a community fair in Jefferson Parish at Clearview Mall and the sponsor is Healthy Blue. Erick T. speak to parents that have kids with disabilities at the Mc Maine center. Erick then explained to the SILC what the McMaine center is.

SPIL GOAL #1: Objective 1: Activity 8: Partnerships with other advocacy groups by including reports from other groups or presentations from other groups

Sharron Hennessey gave a breakdown of the handout regarding housing and the housing committee, but first went back to clear something up regarding accessible parking. Now, regarding housing, the housing committee is trying to create a unified voice regarding advocacy and their will have a statewide advocacy meeting regarding what needed to be done. She went onto talk about the QAP and how it can be influenced as well and how it is only a two-week time frame. Bambi stated that if anyone want to be involved in housing committee to tell Sharron.

Danny and Rosezella reflection on Kris Hebert

SPIL GOAL #2: Objective 1: Activity 1: SILC Director will attend the LRC meeting and provide information on SILC activities and report back to the SILC information learned at the LRC meeting.

* Jessica discussed a report regarding LRC and gave the facts which where:
  + In January 2020 five LRS staff persons retired
  + As of January 22, 2020, 9,357 open VR cases and 2078 open Pre Employment Transition Services case type.
  + LRS is currently working on the combined WIOA state plan with other WIOA partners
  + In program year 2018, LRS placed 1,384 persons with disabilities in successful employment after they received vocational rehabilitation services.
  + Last year LRS quality assurance staff reviewed all of our eight regional offices by taking a sample from each counselor.  LRS statewide received an overall score of 94.9 percent, which is satisfactory.
  + The LRC made a recommendation to have a seat at the table in regards to LRC budget
  + Marvin Rush stated that he would be willing to serve on the Executive Committee. The voting will take place at the next LRC meeting.
  + Next meeting is April 30th

SPIL GOAL #2: Objective 2: Activity 1: Identify disability issues and organize campaign in favor of individuals with disabilities

Jessica discussed the accessible flyer. Everyone though it was a good idea and suggest some changed. Suggest to send in PDF once corrected. Motion by Dayan, and seconded by Anita. Legislative agenda will include SPAS program, community choice waiver, housing, and accessible parking, public testimony is suggested. Make sure we are not lobbying but support the issues of the agenda without asking for money.

Jamie D. REVUP- has beginning putting together a REVUP up workshop and a conference call will be set up to discuss. Jamie D. will do a table at FHF event in March.

Michelle G.- Michelle handed out planning for disasters and AT need handout that they use at shelters. Also she explained EMDAC. Suggested to do some educational seminars. Do 3 events and start at the CIL’s. Amy Dawson stated she will assist also.

Mitch made motion and Sharron and Dayan second to move forward with planning of events with Emergency prep committee.

REVUP committee – Steven added

Emergency prep committee -Erick was added

SPIL GOAL #2: Objective 2: Activity 2: Advocate for improvement on transportation issues that affect individuals with disabilities

Jamie A. shared the process of FTA funds awarded to the state and explained match requirements. Goal is to bring attention to the local match requirements for transportation and that is a very common struggle for why programs can’t expand or even service the existing needs.

SPIL GOAL #3: Objective1: Activity 2: Exploring opportunities for resource development for activities of the SILC and CILs

Ideas about community event

Rashad spoke about waiting of approval with funding for Job Fair but he is looking for other community partners. Maybe regional sponsors.

SPIL GOAL #3: Objective 2: Activity 1: Participating in webinars, conference calls, and training from national groups

DOTD provided transit training for sub recipients will do another in spring or summer. ED will participate in NCIL training since we are now a part of NCIL. Ms. Sharron gave a training on guiding.

SPIL GOAL #1: Objective 1: Activity 7: Plans for the next annual meeting at a Center for Independent Living

The ED discussed the next meetings along with handouts regarding the dates were given.

NEW Business

Vote on legislative agenda-

SPAS program- Daryn motioned and Steven Seconded Erick abstained

Community Choice Waiver- Daryn motioned and Jamie D. Seconded

SB 252 Accessible Parking- Erick motioned and Steven Seconded

Supported Decision Making – Sharron H. motioned and Erick Seconded

Gala-motion by Dayan and second Sharron G. to explore ideas of Gala

Closing Comments- Anita announce she is an employee of DOC now. Rashad will now do an inspirational moment.

Membership was announced. See beginning of day 2.

RV. motioned to adjourn and DB. seconded.

Approve minutes on 5/7/20. Erick T. motioned and A. Harrell seconded with corrections.