

Texas State Independent Living Council
Meeting Minutes
October 6-7, 2011
La Posada Hotel
1000 Zaragoza Street, Laredo, TX 78040

October 6

Opening: The quarterly meeting of the Texas State Independent Living Council (SILC) was called to order at 9:00 am by Michelle Crain, SILC Chair.

Present:

Members in Attendance- Randell Resneder, Scotty Sherrill, Michelle Crain, Karen Swearingen, Crystal Choi, Peggy Cosner, Richard Couder, Jim Bachelor, Shannon Alexander, Lance Hamilos

Others in Attendance- Regina Blye, Karissa Garcia, Maggie Schleich

Members Not in Attendance: Saul Herrera, Kristen Jones, Gloria Greeder, Susie Grona, Donald Landry

Introductions:

Crystal helps her parents run an online store. She moved to Dallas, TX about 2 years ago from AZ.

Richard Couder is from El Paso and is a Special Educator. He also runs St. Pius' special needs group (focuses on social/recreational activities, employment, and IL services).

Randell Resneder has been on Council for about 2 years. He's working on his Doctorate, runs an energy company, and is developing a disability awareness week for April.

Karen Swearingen lives outside Dallas. She worked as an RN for 20+ years and now works in education. Her youngest child is deaf and is now in college.

Jim Bachelor served in Military and sustained a traumatic brain injury while in Iraq. He's an advocate who has been to DC, and works with other vets in negotiating the VA. He's also working on MA in Psychology.

Peggy Cosner is the Executive Director of Heart of Central Texas CIL and Chair of TACIL.

Scotty Sherrill is finishing her 6th year on the Council, and was director of a nonprofit rehabilitation center for many years.

Lance Hamilos is in the Rehab Services division at DARS, and has a background in working with people with hearing impairments.

Shannon Alexander is from Bryan, and has a degree in Vocational Rehabilitation. She works at A&M, and has background in conference planning, including the TX Advanced Leadership and Advocacy Conference (TALAC), which will be held February 26-28, 2012. The focus this year is on educating participants about changes in legislature and how that impacts advocacy. She also serves on BVCIL, a local CIL board.

Michelle Crain Chairs the SILC and has been on the Council since '01. She runs Life, Inc., and is a peer mentor who travels around the U.S. to work with CILs in other states.

Addressed:

- Executive Committee Elections Review- Crain noted that several senior members were not present and proposed that the group table the elections until Blye can send out something that would enable the entire Council to nominate candidates and review applicable information. Blye indicated that were descriptions of each Council position in the packet, and that all positions are open, including committee positions. Crain made a motion to table the elections until the next quarterly meeting; Swearingen seconded the motion; motion carried.
 - Resneder asked if positions are only open to members who have previously served on the Council, and Blye stated that she feels it's best if someone had time on the Council before taking on a leadership role. Cosner agreed, but stated there is nothing in the by-laws that requires it. Crain added that there should be something in the by-laws requiring experience before someone can serve (e.g., minimum of a year), and Cosner agreed. Resneder asked about his proposed amendment, and Blye clarified that he could amend his amendment.
- Crain suggested a closed session on the agenda to evaluate Blye. Resneder made a motion to add a closed session to the agenda; Cosner seconded; motion carried.

Ex-Officio and Other Reports

- Hamilos provided an update of the Division of Blind Services (DBS), including current statistics for the number of consumers served, as well as an update on obligation of the SFY 2011 stimulus funds. DBS statistics as of 8/31/11:
 - 3,493 individuals served
 - 881 in "active" services, including both individuals determined eligible and individuals receiving services
 - 1,448 successfully completed their program
 - 2,057 new referrals in SFY 2011
 - 100% of Rider funds were obligated, providing 220 individuals with services
 - DBS obligated 100% Stimulus funds for SFY2011

- Hamilos (from the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) within DARS) gave an update on the DRS' Independent Living program, including information on the Rider funds used to provide assistive technology and other equipment/services in order to circumvent institutionalization of persons with disabilities. DRS statistics as of 9/1/11 (27 CILs in TX, 15 of those receive DARS funding):
 - 5,133 consumers served through CILs (original SFY 2011 target was 10,170, but was later reduced to 6,672).
 - Number of consumers served by DRS ILS counselors- 1,478 (who had a plan or a waived plan and also received a service)
 - Number of consumers served by DRS ILS counselors who achieved their goals- 794
 - Number of consumers served from Demographic Growth Funds- 51
 - Number of consumers served through Rider 27 2011 monies (at-risk funds)- 157
 - Number of individuals on the ILS waiting list- 1,051 as of end of August

Hamilos also provided an update on the revised CIL forms and standards and is now working to ensure that signatures can be submitted electronically.

- Karissa Garcia from DARS gave an update on internal changes at DARS. She explained that she works in Stakeholder Relations. Garcia said that Glenn Neal became Deputy Commissioner and Elizabeth Gregowciz is still out on medical leave, and hopes to return in January 2012.

Garcia said HB 3616 was passed during last Session, which makes October Disability History Awareness Month. DARS will highlight programming related to each month's issue on the website (e.g., awareness of autism program at DARS during autism awareness week/month).

Garcia talked about the current screening tool on the DARS website (www.dars.state.tx.us/drs/screentest.asp), which helps initiate the application process for potential consumers.

Garcia said 166 people are waiting with an ID number and have a plan, and will be able to access information re: how long they will have to wait for CRS services online (average time seems to be about 4 months now) in mid-October. There will also be a zip code lookup, which will inform potential consumers which DBS or DARS local office would be able to provide services.

Garcia reported that updating the website to increase accessibility is in the works and should be rolled out next year.

DBS celebrated 80 years of service this month, and local events will be listed on DARS' new online calendar.

Karissa Garcia reported that DARS tracked 215 bills during the last Session, and 31 required implementation. Three of those were: HB 1481 (use of person first

language), HB 3616 (October as Disability History and Awareness Month), and SB 501 an act relating to the disproportionality of certain groups in the juvenile justice, child welfare, health, and mental health systems and the disproportionality of the delivery of certain services in the education system.

- Peggy Cosner explained that not every state has a membership organization for CILs, but TX has TACIL, which is made up of volunteer members from all but one of the CILs in TX.

Cosner provided an update on TACIL, which has received a grant to help increase awareness around Centers. TACIL also hired its first Executive Director, Mack Marsh, who has been on board about six months and works from the TACIL office located in Austin.

Cosner said that TACIL typically has about three face-to-face meetings a year and rotates locations (often Dallas because it's convenient).

At TACIL's last face to face meeting in September, they visited a local Center (CBCIL), and discussed data collection since it has been inconsistent across Centers, and given that Centers meet a variety of needs. TACIL wants to have consistency and majority have agreed to use the consumer satisfaction survey, which is due in November. TACIL will submit an annual 704 to DARS (due at end of December) and member Centers wait until the end, so not all of the reports will be in until January.

Cosner also noted that there has been a change in TACIL officers: Cosner remains as Chair, Laura Mattheis is the Treasurer, Jackie Pacha is the new Secretary, and the Vice-Chair is Jim Brocato. All of TACIL's paper work is centralized online in Austin but available in real time for other members across the state. Cosner also indicated that TACIL's advocacy groups are looking at how to communicate consistent messages, and want to work with SILC on conference because TACIL members have said they want a breakout or track specific to Centers' staff and boards.

Resneder said it was a good idea to have different tracks, and provide more topics re: jobs. Crain responded that that Blye will develop an RFP for proposals. Cosner said that TACIL could submit a proposal.

Cosner reported that the cut to Centers' RSA funds was small (2%), but reiterates that in 14 months, additional cuts could come again.

Choi wanted to know how people find local centers online. Cosner and Crain suggested the TACIL and DARS or DADs web sites, and the SILC web site. Bachelor said that many veterans could use this information.

Crain said that since Centers will be working on the 704 reports, they will need to access the clean, correct version of the SPIL. Blye commented that the rtf file on

DARS and SILC sites were difficult to read, so the correct version needs to be re-uploaded. Blye explained that she brought hard copies in the meantime. Crain asked Blye and Hamilos whether the SPIL will need to be modified since Hamilos previously reported that the target has changed with re: the number of consumers served. Blye said that those numbers are specific to the state target, rather than the total for all of the Centers.

- Michelle Crain made a few recommendations since she is leaving as Chair: get to know the CILs in your area as you serve on the Council, but do not lose your identity because the CILs and SILC play different roles. And, get involved with education and outreach because the SILC should promote visibility of the CILs. Some of the Designated State Units (DSU) don't have the level of collaboration that we have here in TX, and the relationship is in good shape at this point.

Resneder mentioned disability awareness week, and Blye affirmed that the agenda item could fall under New Business.

Couder asked about state vs. federal funding for Centers. Crain answered that some receive one or the other, or both. He asked what percentage of the total population is served at the Centers, and Crain said it's about 1%, but that's a large number given the size of TX, and that there are more people to serve. Cosner stated that we only have coverage in pockets, as opposed to the entire state. Blye referenced the map in the SPIL, which shows where Centers are located and that the SILC's activities and reporting helps determine where new Centers should be located.

Old Business

Crain said that the SILC will need someone to sit on the RCT since she is leaving (their meetings are the last Friday of the quarter). There will be a joint meeting in January between SILC and RCT (likely in Austin).

Blye said that the by-laws were amended in June and approved at the last quarterly meeting in. Blye was supposed to add language re: quorum, and has done so. Resneder has since proposed an amendment since the Treasurer position was not incorporated into the by-laws, yet Saul Herrera has been serving as the Treasurer. Blye read the language of the proposed amendment:

Whereas: The current bylaws do not include a treasurer position

Whereas: The SILC had had a treasurer recently

Therefore, let it be resolved: Add D. The Treasurer will oversee all fiscal matters of the SILC and other duties assigned by the Chair.

Sherrill questioned whether this position is new, and Blye and Crain said that this position existed previously as a combined Secretary/Treasurer position. Resneder asked if there needs to be note taker, and Blye said that, right now, someone is taking the notes and the Chair signs off. Blye proposed that the Secretary take the minutes going forward. Resneder asked who is continuing as

members, and Blye lists: Randell, Karen, Saul, Donald, and Peggy. Blye clarified that Council members continue serving on the Council even though terms have expired until they receive notification otherwise.

Crain called for a motion to accept the newly proposed amendment to by-laws; Cosner seconded; motion carried.

Crain revisited the earlier discussion that the Council members serve at least a year before taking on a leadership position. Alexander said that since appointed in three-year terms, one year experience seems reasonable.

Cosner called for a motion to amend the by-laws to require one year of service on the Council prior to taking on a leadership position. Bachelor seconded; motion carried.

Sherrill mentions that an accounting background would be beneficial for Treasurer position. Crain reiterates that it's important for the Council to take a good look at the financial position of the Council on an ongoing basis. Choi asks whether older members would be able to train someone new. Alexander emphasized that attendance at meetings helps orient new members, and Crain agrees that participation is key.

Blye confirmed that the policies and procedures have been updated to reflect the change in language (accountant has been changed to ED's designate). Fiscally, the SILC is on the state calendar, but operationally, we work off the federal calendar. The fiscal year begins in October.

Crain confirmed that everyone has the minutes from the previous meetings.

Blye confirmed that Gabi Fuentes from the Governor's Appointments office agreed that the language around the quorum sounded acceptable.

Crain called for motion to approve minutes from the last meeting; Cosner seconded; motion carried.

Previous Action Items

Blye confirmed that Lois Landry, TX SILC's Administrative Assistant, revised the reporting form, and that the four reports received (Resneder, Grona, Cosner, and Landry's reports) have been integrated into the copy provided at this meeting, along with a sample report. Going forward, Blye said, Council members should complete the reports ahead of time, which helps the SILC in staying on track with activities.

Blye updated the Council on San Antonio as a possible conference site: Due to Fiesta, many of the hotels weren't able to honor state rate. Three were able to accommodate state rate, but didn't have enough accessible options, or would have required participants to move up and down on multiple floors, and others

were just too small. Now, Blye is looking at Dallas and Austin, and challenge is to find a hotel that will accommodate a large group since they are only required to have a certain number of ADA rooms. Alexander asked whether SILC would consider Galveston because she has a connection with the San Luis, Hilton and Holiday Inn hotels, which are all next to each other along the coast, and attendees can fly in/out of Houston. Crain expressed some concern re: travel costs to a location like Galveston, but agreed it would be good to consider as many options as possible. Alexander also mentioned the San Marcos conference facility, and Blye expressed some concern about travel to the conference center since a taxi could cost about \$75/one way.

Blye confirmed that the safe deposit box has been closed.

Blye confirmed that DARS approved the \$282,857 budget and reviewed line items in budget.

Blye mentioned that the Council will have the option to visit the local CIL, and expressed that the Council attends meetings in as many parts of the state as possible, including Laredo, to see both underserved areas, as well as areas with strong centers and easier access.

Cosner summarized challenges regarding outreach, such as reaching individuals who don't identify as a person with a disability, like wounded veterans or Baby Boomers with diabetes-related complications. Alexander echoed that there is a perceptual gap among many people who need services. Cosner talked about importance of reaching people where they are, and that the CILs serve people with physical disabilities with the IL philosophy, rather than the ADRCs who focus on aging and from a caretaking perspective.

Blye confirmed that the 3161 form is not required for the federally-funded Centers.

Updates on SPIL tabled for Public Comment 2:20 pm

Blye reported that as Chair of SILC Congress, she has been working with planning committee to plan the meeting in January. Blye reported that she's part of an inclusion-focused group convened by OneStar to increase the number of persons with disabilities participating in the public sector, including AmeriCorps placement(s) at CILs and/or SILCs.

Blye reported that she spent a lot of time interviewing people for positions, as proposed in the last grant cycle, that would work on the SILC's budget is now at \$282,857.

Blye submitted proposals in July and August for DD grants (advanced leadership, and wellness) that would add 75 participants with developmental disabilities to

annual conference, and to provide resources at two centers, as well as technical assistance to improve access to health and fitness services and information first in Brazos Valley and then El Paso.

Blye said that she also attended a conference in St. Louis on attendant services.

Blye said she is currently working on a proposal for a TXDOT grant, Transportation Works, that would increase information about transportation services that will transport PWDS from rural areas that to jobs in urban areas. Right now, the focus is the Odessa/Midland area.

Crain called for motion to adjourn at 3:08 pm. Swearingen made a motion, Resneder seconded; motion carried.

Action Items:

- Blye will send request for nominations for open Council positions, including committee leadership roles (via e-mail).
- In response to Crain's inquiry re: Objective C for Goal 1 in the SPIL, Hamilos agreed to check with Beth Dennis.
- Cosner said that TACIL owes SILC \$10k from last year's conference, and will transfer funds within 30 days.
- Crain will send out the link to the completed SILC and RCT needs assessment.
- Blye will send out additional information re: joint SILC/RCT meeting in January 2012.
- Crain will set up a teleconference to conduct Blye's annual review with participation from senior members.
- Lois Landry will send out electronic copies of the new forms, along with a reminder about halfway through the quarter (for all of the Council members).
- Blye will send out a summary of conference hotel options to the Council.
- Blye will send an e-mail to CIL directors to identify any pressing concerns that could be tied to the 2012 annual conference.
- Hamilos agreed to send the Blye the updated 3161 (as a Word document), which Blye will modify to include the SILC logo, and send on to the federally-funded CILs.
- Hamilos will set up a meeting with Mack Marsh (TACIL), and Blye (SILC) to clarify intention of language in Chapter 8 with re: review of financials (Part B funds).
- Crain will provide Blye with a hard copy of the SPIL with all of the attachments so that Blye can make sure she has the most recent copy.
- Blye will make sure the final version of the SPIL is sent to Hamilos.
- Hamilos will follow up with Crain and Blye to ensure that the correct version of the SPIL is up on the DARS web site.
- Hamilos will talk to Media department @ DARS in order to get a large number of hard copies, and make sure the final version is up on the respective websites by the end of October.

October 7

- Crain called the meeting to order at 9:07 am
- Blye gave an overview of the committees
 - Bachelor joined the Community Relations committee
 - Choi joined the Planning and Evaluation committee
 - Alexander joined the Systems Advocacy committee
 - Couder joined the Community Relations committee
 - Hamilos joined the Planning and Evaluation committee
 - Crain confirmed with senior board members that they will remain on their committees

Alexander said she would also participate in conference planning
 Cosner recommended that Mack Marsh participate in conference planning
 Choi recommended communicating from a distance using oovo as service because you can use multiple web cameras for a group meeting.

Community Relations Committee

- Resneder was Chair of Conference sub-committee within Community Relations. At last meeting, the word “awesome” was introduced as possible component of theme.
 Blye suggested i-phone analogy – SILC conference connects you quickly to variety of resources.
 Couder passed around resource guide suggesting developing a session on creating your own guide, a “Statewide guide”.
 Swearingen suggested picture/icons next to each session in the conference program.
 Richard mentioned surveying centers to see what their concerns are.
 Blye reported out from Community Relations Committee, which discussed the 2012 annual conference, including possible locations and themes. The conference committee will meet once the hotel and dates have been confirmed in order to identify theme(s).

Systems Advocacy Committee

- Cosner reported that the committee is re-establishing itself to ensure cross-disability focus on both local and statewide levels. The SILC committee will reach out TACIL who will provide at least one statewide training.

Planning and Evaluation Committee

- Crain reported on the committee will work with Blye and Hamilos to ensure that the correct copy of the SPIL is online in time for the Council and CIL Directors to complete their part of the 704.

Blye asked for completed W-9s, which are required by DARS.
 Blye conducted a brief SILC training for board members.

Blye introduced the reimbursement form – they should be dated on the day you submit the form.

Blye introduced the trip advance form – per diem could be higher/lower depending on the area; please give as much time as possible when requesting an advance.

Blye introduced the SILC self-assessment as a way for her to ascertain the Council's familiarity with IL and the SILC, and tailor training accordingly.

- Resneder motioned to adjourn; Swearingen seconded; meeting adjourned at 11:10 am

Signature

Date