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NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INDEPENDENT LIVING

WORKING TOGETHER

BUILDING A STATEWIDE IL NETWORK THROUGH CIL & SILC COLLABORATION

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>> Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to today's webinar, working together building a statewide IL network. The webinar is brought to you by SILC‑NET. Operated through a partnership among ILRU. Utah State University ‑‑ and April. So we are recording today's call. Now it will be archived on ILRU's website so you can view it or share with other's later. It usually takes about 48 hours to get that up so all of you are in presentation mode which means you can use the features but your lines are muted. I want to point out the Q&A tab at the bottom of the screen. There are a few ‑‑ there is a menu of features that you should be seeing. Among them is the Q&A tab. You enter your questions any time during today's call. We will wait for one of our Q&A breaks to address them. We have three Q&A breaks today. Plenty of time for questions so I hope you will take advantage of that. If you have a comment for us that is not a question, you are welcome to use the chat feature. That's under the more options on the webinar platform. You're also some of you probably have the captioning up already. Please know with that captioning you can change the size of it. If you are only seeing one line of captioning, you can put your curser over it and you should see an arrow and you can click that arrow to make the captioning larger. To display seven or eight lines of text once you do that. If that is still not large enough or if you would like to manipulate the font size. And want to use the full screen cart captioning, that's the same link we used for years, that's the StreamText link that we sent 20 you. When you do that you pull up the full screen CART. Manipulate font size, color, contrast, anything you would like. That full screen CART does have a chat feature. I'm logged in there. And you can enter your questions or comments during the call and I will voice them during the Q&A break so don't forget that's available.

Finally, at the end of our webinar today when you close the platform, our evaluation form will open up on your screen. And I hope you all will fill it out. It will not take long it complete and we do value your feedback. We are looking for ways to improve these webinars and all of our trainings through the IL‑NET. We really do take it seriously and we try to make improvements.

So before I go to the next slide, I want to take a minute to thank all of our presenters for being here today and for the time they put into developing this presentation. I'm always so amazed at how many folks around the country in IL are willing to take time out of their schedules which is not easy to do to share what they learned and their expertise with all of the rest of us around the country. That's no exception here.

So with us today, slide three for this, we have Kathy Cooper, Bob Mikesic and Deone Wilson. Kathy is the executive director of the Kansas SILC and she has been there since 2013 and she has over 20 years of experience in IL and advocacy in Kansas. Bob is the co‑executive director at independence Inc. which is in Lawrence, Kansas and Deone Wilson is the executive director in Osage City Kansas. And anyway, I just ‑‑ I really enjoyed working with you all and I want to thank you for your time putting together the presentation and for being with us today. You see here on slide three that Kathy, Bob and Deone Wilson have been generous to add their contact information. I want to add my own to this. It's not just a training project but a technical assistance project as well. There is really no wrong door in terms of getting help from folks from the IL‑NET. Any one of our partner organizations, we were happy to help you if you have questions coming up whether it's related to today's content or not, I hope you reach out to us. My e‑mail is very simple. Many of you know it. So anyway, please let us know if you have any questions after the call.

Before we start today, I will review the objectives Here are the things that we are expecting to cover today and that you all will learn. First the statutory requirement related to developing collaborative relationships between skills and the SILC. Second, CILs and the silk. Strategic processes for developing and maintaining a strong statewide network to advocate, collaborate on the SPIL and deal with statewide issues as a team. Finally, examples of common barriers and ongoing collaboration, projects and advocacy solutions.

So that's it for the things I wanted to cover today in our introduction. I will go to slide five and turn it over to Kathy to get us started with those statutory requirements.

>> Thank you, Tim. Let's see, we will start with this. This is kind of the part that I feel like ‑‑ oh, this is the boring part. This is the reason that one of the ‑‑ we have to go over why we need to collaborate and why it's important not only because of what it gets us, but because it's the law. Statutory requirements Title VII section 701, the purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to promote a philosophy of independence living including philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self‑help, self‑determination, equal access and individual and system advocacy, in order to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence and productivity of individuals with disabilities and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society by ‑‑ next slide.

By providing financial assistance to states for providing expanding and improving the provision of IL services. To provide financial assistance to develop and support statewide networks of CILs. And three providing financial assistance to states for improving working relationships among state Independent Living rehabilitation service programs, CILs, SILCs, state VR programs, state programs of supported employment services, programs funded under other titles of this Act, and under other federal law and programs funded through non‑federal sources.

So then to continue with that, section 701A, administration of the independent living program. There is established within the administration for community living of the Department of Health and Human Services an Independent Living Administration. The ILA. The ILA director shall be an individual with substantial knowledge of IL services. ILA shall be the principal agency and the director shall be the principal officer to carry out this chapter, chapter 1 of Title VII of the Rehab Act as amended.

So then section 705, the statewide Independent Living council. This slide talks about some of our composition and what we need to have so composition, council shall include, at least one director of a CIL chosen by the directors of the CILs within the state. And for a State in which one or more CILs are run by or in conjunction with the governing bodies of American Indian tribes located on federal or state reservations at least one representative of the directors of such centers. And I will say in Kansas we don't have this, but we do still have a tribal member on our SILC. We have seen great benefit for that we did continue to go on with that even though it's not a requirement for Kansas any more. Number three additional members may include other representatives from CILs. And I will tell you really quickly in Kansas we do have an additional CIL member on our board as well and we actually just put in a recommendation for an appointment for a third.

We will move on to slide number nine. Section 705, again on the statewide Independent Living council, the qualifications in general, the council shall be composed of members who are knowledgeable about CILs and IL services. And of course this isn't all of the requirements or anything like that, but these are the parts that really go back to the collaboration part of it. So it's very important to have those members who are knowledgeable about CILs and IL services. And we don't struggle a lot in Kansas with that because we do have a very good relationship with our governor's appointment office so they do look to us for the majority of the recommendations to the board, but not all of them and sometimes we do have issues when people are appointed to our boards who really know nothing about a center or by IL services. That's always a struggle, I think.

Ready for number ten.

In Kansas, we will talk about the IL network history. Some of the challenges we had in Kansas, you know, we had a big federal audit done by RSA when we were still under that Department of The fed and they took a really deep look at the circulars and the regulations and they said, hey, wait a minute, Kansas. You're not doing things the way that we interpret they should be done. Because of that, a big audit was done not only on the center for independent living and on the SILC but also our vocational rehabilitation. So we had a pretty large payback for Kansas. It was several million dollars overall that had to be paid back to the Feds by the state and then the State reached down to the centers and the SILC and said we will have to recoup from you as well. And you are wondering why are you bringing this up when we talk about collaboration, but to me I feel like this was one of the major points where our IL network came together over an adversity of these audits and the ‑‑ just the pain of having to pay back all of that money because it really did hurt the centers and the SILC considerably financially. One thing it did for us was it brought us together on a common goal because of that challenge. So you know you got to take a look at the bad things and find the positive and that is a big positive that came out of what happened in Kansas with the audits and the pay back and all of that kind of stuff.

The slide 11, please. Another way that Kansas is really good at collaborating between the SILC and the CILs is SPIL development. So all of our CILs are involved and we have currently we have ten centers for Independent Living in the state of Kansas and the last SPIL we had 11 but all 11 of those centers were involved in the development of the SPIL. We did it two different ways. We divided the SPIL up into sections and the SILC and CIL staff worked on those sections and so every center had a staff person working on a section with the SILCK and the directors were at a day long meeting of the draft. The SPIL and every single center director was there and some even brought more staff to come with them to help. So what we did in Kansas last year because ‑‑ or not last year. But last SPIL because it was my first SPIL as a director of a SILC, we hired a facilitator to come in for that thousand one day meeting and work with all of us on new ideas and how to really envelop that we owe changes and what those meant and that they gave us additional freedoms in our CIL in ways to change to things that had always been done the exact same way before. I highly looking into a facilitator, especially if you are kind of new to the SILC or maybe this is your first SPIL or whatever. It was a benefit to all of us. And it was a neutral party. If there were any type of issues between the SILC and the CILs and what everybody's perception of what should be in the SPIL was. Not that there was a lot but it did help.

Another thing that we did that really showed a good collaboration for Kansas was after we had the draft of the SPIL developed, we had public ‑‑ sorry public forums afterwards and all of the CILs invited their consumers in their community to their CIL and we did a webinar Zoom like this what we are doing here where everybody could hear the same thing that was happening in Topeka, Kansas, which was central location for the SPIL, and everybody could ask questions and everybody heard everybody else's questions and it was a way for the entire state and all of the CILs to be at one big public forum together, which I think worked pretty well.

So some of the things that we did that I felt really kind of brought us closer as an IL network was we worked on language for when new money comes in and sure that most everybody did this or hopefully they did, but we kind of got down into more details than we ever gotten down into before and we took a look at if, you know not only if more part C money comes or one time federal money as what happened with the RL money but we looked at if there is more state money or what to do when a CIL closes. And this can be kind of a iffy discussion to have if you're CILs ‑‑ if you don't have a good relationship with your CILs or your CILs don't have a good relationship with each other. But we were just super honest about it. And we said, what are we going to do and we put it down in writing. And we made sure that not only the SILCK but the CILs got to put in recommendations on these issues, too. That's another huge point to make on collaboration is that it truly is a peer relationship so I'm very good about that, I think, I'm always portraying that we are just another partner. We are just a partner in the IL network. It made a big difference because this helps everyone feel equal and if you have that, it's a lot easier for everybody to come to the table and have tough discussions like what to do when a CIL closes, what to do if there is more money? How do we divide it. All of those kinds of things.

Ready for slide number 13, please.

Another big thing that we did that helped us all come together was SPIL work groups were created in our last state plan for Independent Living. These SPIL work groups are for our major objectives and our goals in their out reach, their employment transportation and housing and we will touch on those in a little bit, in later on in the presentation, but those are staffed by center staff and sometimes outside representation from community organizations. The SILC board members are on those as well. By and large they are created solely by SILC staff. And it's usually a center person from each center. So there has been a lot of really great stuff that's happened with that. A lot of networks and peer sharing and so again that's increased the comradery and the relationship between the CILs as well. The SPIL forums, we also have had day long meetings where all of the CILs get together to understand the SPIL and the next steps because SPILs are difficult. When I got here our SPIL was 58 pages long and it ‑‑ I'm not even quite sure I understood it completely. So we wanted to make sure at our next ‑‑ with our next SPIL this last one that we done, that the people understood it and not meant the people who were actually out there on the streets doing the services. And so that's why we had ‑‑ our staff come together and really ask questions and decide what groups they wanted to be in and I guess the peer sharing has been amazing for those.

Just a real quickie on the SPIL work groups. The work groups set their own goals and action steps. And the facilitator of each group gives an update at every SILC meeting and then it's sent out to all of the CILs and the DSE and we will get into a little bit more detail about that here later on in the presentation. But this just re‑enforces how the collaboration between the groups by setting their own goals and action steps are SPIL and the objectives and the action steps in the SPIL were pretty general. And we felt okay with that because we really wanted it to make a difference and by them setting their own goals we felt that would happen and so the goals that have come out of it have been pretty cool. And then the facilitator giving an update at every SILCK meeting and that's how the SILCK can evaluate and monitor the SPIL and I highly recommend that as well. So on to the next.

So slide 15, just some other ways that the SILCK and the CILs collaborate together. We have met with the Department of Education in the state of Kansas here recently and it was myself and a center director, Bob Mikesic. This is one of the first times this has happened in Kansas. And we went together as part of the network not representing just the SILCK or just the CILs. We went to them and said hey, here is what we have to offer you as a network and what we would like to see as far as partnering with you and they were almost relieved because they have goals themselves to work with more community partners and to get the resources out and we just offered it up into their lap like this golden egg. It worked out great. The Department of Transportation in Kansas is another way that we've kind of make sure that we collaborate. I'm on a steering work group for SILCK with the Department of Transportation because, you know a lot of times these agencies don't want 27 members on a work group. They only want ten or whatever. So what I do is I make sure that any time there is a disability related issue for transportation, they come to me and then I send everything out to the centers or if there is a survey or if they want to go and talk about the ‑‑ the mobility managers or the transportation issues between providers from one county to another county or whatever that may be, I can then connect them with the transportation work group of the SPIL or with different centers for Independent Living and whatever region they are looking for and it's another way that we collaborate and it's honestly another way that this SILCK provides meaning or kind of that, you know, it's how we show our value to the CILs and the rest of the network.

So slide 16, personal touch from the SILC. This is how I feel that I offer a personal touch to the centers. I have actually been a staff person in multiple positions at a couple of different centers and I think that has helped me tremendously be able to go to the centers and talk with them and already have kind of a reputation for knowing a lot of what they are going through or what they have been through or just what centers have to deal with on a day to day basis. I also do direct contact with each center director over difficult issues. So when we have had issues that have arisen where we had to and centers to do more or a center was closing or ‑‑ whatever the circumstance was, yeah, I can send out an e‑mail and I do that a lot and I put information in there but I will contact each center director personally and say, hey, what do you think? What are your issues? Do you see any problems or do you have anything that you want to bring up so this can make it better for you. I think this personal touch really means a lot to the directors and helps and then builds the trust as well.

I spread the love. There are no favorites. And that really ‑‑ you got to be careful of that. Obviously you have personalities that you may prefer over others, but you can never have a favorite because that's not what you are there for as a SILC. So I'm careful about that as well. And then another thing that I try to do to add value to my centers, when I developed the SILC materials, I try to make sure that they are always CIL user friendly. By that I mean when I do the annual report every year, in the beginning I started it out with the ten page paper with all of the data and the statistics and the technical writing and all of that kind of stuff that I know that nobody read. So then what I do now is I do an info graphic and I put on there information that is great for me as a SILC to hand out to legislators, state agencies, other organizations, but it's also super easy and translatable for centers to pass this out as well whenever they need to send that to a legislator or anybody else because it's statistics on things that centers have done across the state of Kansas or it's survey results to show how people's lives have changed due to independence from services from a center for Independent Living and it has a brief description of what centers for Independent Living do, what services they offer. So I always try to keep that in mind because I want them to be able to use the IL network information. I want it to be generic so anybody can use it at any time. And that is it for me.

>> For now. Okay, great. Thank you, Kathy. So we will do our first Q&A break. Just a reminder here, the Q&A feature is at the bottom of your screen. You can type your questions there. You can also use the full screen in captioning. I'm logged in there. And finally if you are only on the phone or cannot access those features for any other reason, you are welcome to submit your questions by e‑mail. I prefer you use the webinar platform if you are able, if you can the not, you can e‑mail questions to me. And I will voice those for you on the call.

The first question comes from Ann and she asks, aren't the goals included in the SPIL? How do the work group goals work with the SPIL goals?

>> Yes, the goals are a little bit general, though, by the fact that there are things like build capacity for the centers for Independent Living. And then under our objectives, like the outreach work group would go in and meet and say, okay, how can we do that? How can we collectively build capacity or make sure that people know that centers have services for people with disabilities and they came up with ‑‑ they came up with things like having a common message or, you know sharing radio jingles that are generic and any center can use those and put their information in. They come up with tag lines that they can all use and the SILC uses it as well. They do like on all of their social media they do a hashtag. Yes, we have goals in the SPIL but then the finite action point to get to those goals were really what the SPIL work groups came up with on their own and it's a little confusing because we do call those the SPIL work group goals whereas they go up to the larger goals. The SPIL. I hope that helps.

>> The next question comes from Michael. Michael asks, did you have public forums for the development of the SPIL to gather the needs as well as forum to review the draft SPIL?

>> Yes, we did. We did public forums two different times. In the beginning the SILC went around to five different places in Kansas and we hit rural spots this time and we went to the four corners of the state and then right in the middle. The SILCs helped us with those as they got the word out to consumers and stuff and I didn't necessarily have those public forums at the center for Independent Living. I had them at schools. I had them at libraries, just different places like that. And we did start with that first and got all of kind of the ‑‑ you know what's working and what's not working and what would you like to see? What are your issues in your region? And then ‑‑ you know along with other tools that you use, we developed a draft of the SPIL. Then after we had the draft ‑‑ that's when we ‑‑ the public forums that were at each center for Independent Living and then had people give us their comes or questions on that draft SPIL.

>> Okay, great. We got a few more minute for questions. I don't see any now and let me give 20 seconds to see if any more questions come in. Just again as a reminder you can type your questions in the Q&A feature at the bottom of the screen. Or use the chat feature. Or you can e‑mail. I won't get them for several weeks so I wouldn't recommend that one.

I think that's it. So let's go ahead to slide 18. Again, we will have two more Q&A breaks later in the call. Plenty of time for questions. Here on slide 18 I will turn it over to Bob to continue.

>> Thank you. So ongoing collaboration and teamwork occurred during the four SPIL work groups and these exists not only in the current SPIL but the previous SPIL and they were ‑‑ primarily of the consumer input during the public forums, especially the employment housing and transportation work groups. The outreach work group, that's something that all centers for Independent Living are required to do on an ongoing basis, and I think we realized that it takes a more concerted effort for us all to improve how we provide services and teach advocacy in those key areas that so many people with disabilities have goals. So that's kind of how these began. To make it easier to focus in an ongoing effort.

So as Kathy mentioned, work groups included staff from every center, both new staff and more experienced staff were invited to participate. So many centers have more than one person on a work group. And the objective, of course, was to increase peer networking. Share information, just strengthen the Independent Living network statewide and our ability to respond and work with people with disabilities with various disabilities. Promote a coordinated way to meet goals in this SPIL and probably most ‑‑ in the CIL and ‑‑ SPIL. And increase opportunities for people with disabilities to obtain employment, housing and transportation. Which are key parts of life in order to accomplish goals you have in your own personal life and ability to be partden ash active part ‑‑ an active part of the community.

Slide 20.

So some examples of successes that occurred in the outreach work group. They developed a recognizing disabilities, emphasizing possibility brands for all centers to use and the SILC adopted it as a tag line. And they developed PowerPoint that all centers could use and including talking points that gave examples of all of the core services. It kind of targeted to three general audiences. The general population, just the general public, people that may or may not be familiar with centers for Independent Living. Youth, since that transition services to youth is a new and high priority core service. And then professionals which not only are social service professionals, but others in the community that interact with people with disabilities or potential funding sources and also in the course of outreach we are not only trying to reach new people with disabilities but also collaborate with other community organizations to increase opportunities and make resources available from others in the community available to people we serve as well.

A public service announcement was developed and again to try to deliver a consistent message that's clear so that people understand because we serve so many different ‑‑ we serve all people with all types of disabilities. There are so many services that we all provide that's it's a challenge to communicate that in a quick and effective way. I think all centers use the PowerPoint in the public service announcement to customize it in a way that includes the additional services they provide that are reflection of their particular area. So it was meant as kind of a launching pad to help everybody improve the way they do outreach.

Slide 21.

The SPIL employment work group developed a SPIL employment resources tool kit that included information about job searching, where to obtain training and improve your skills that makes you more employable. Employee and employer resources and when it's known disability friendly employers in your area. The employment tool kit was distributed on flash drives to all centers to better assist them serve people with disabilities to find employment. And they provided a statewide training at the Kansas disability caucus in August of 2015. That's not the only time they provide that because really throughout the year when a new product was developed by any of these work groups that kind of gets distributed. All of the centers have access to it.

Slide 22.

The spill housing ‑‑ the SPIL housing work group provided a statewide training for all staff who provide housing services. And that includes both fair housing rights, rights under the fair housing law and the state and local laws that provide equivalent coverage and how to use those laws when reasonable accommodation is needed or other ways of making sure their person has equal opportunity for housing. And increases their ability to search and find affordable and accessible housing.

We provided input to the Kansas housing resource corporations consolidated five year plan and each year's action plan. That agency is sort of the largest funder of a lot of housing programs and rent assistance in rural areas that don't receive direct funding because the ‑‑ are not large enough to be titlement communities that automatically get community development block grant funds and home funding. So they can apply ‑‑ they can access programs that the Kansas housing resource corporation funds for not only rent assistance, but first time home buyer programs and things like that.

So the work group also brings in guest speakers who can provide more detailed information about funding accessibility modifications and housing repairs which is a common challenge that people face across the state. Given the fact that there aren't enough resources that assist with those costs.

Slide 23.

The SPIL transportation work group developed a survey that CILs sent to all transportation providers in their areas to be able to assess current capacity and unmet needs for affordable and accessible transportation. The work group efforts increased interaction with different transportation providers in their area and coordination councils. Each group was really encouraged to participate in whatever local provider transportation provider council existed to further the advocacy that's required in order to improve all of these systems so that they are available to people with disabilities and they can travel freely from county to county. It's really not ‑‑ it's not a consistent flow across the state in terms of being able to get where you need to go if you don't own your own vehicle.

This work group also used April's guiding principles and other resources to advocate for improved and affordable accessible transportation in rural areas, targeting the regional chance Department of Transportation transit plans and at local transit meetings.

Next slide.

>> All right, thank you. And we have more time for questions here. So if you have any questions on Bob's section, you type them in the Q&A. Or any of the chat features I talked about earlier.

So Bob, I'm curious, the work groups seem like a really good path to leadership at the IL. How do you pick the leadership? A formal process or informal process? How does that work?

>> Well, I was part of the housing work group and it's the group just kind of voted. It was informal, but after discussing the kinds of services and challenges that we face, certain people, it became more clear, they a little bit more experience or ‑‑ and they got nominated and then it was up to the group to decide. And most groups I think alternated who would be the facilitator or leader. I think it started out being called leaders, but most everybody just wanted to be considered a facilitator because everybody had valuable experience to bring into the conversation. So most groups would tradeoff like each year.

>> Okay. Good. Thanks. And a couple more questions rolling in. Kim asks, how did your employment committee coordinate with your work force board?

>> Bob if you don't mind I had a note specifically towards that so let me jump in and then you can definitely add anything. So here is one of the things that both the employment work group and the outreach work group played a role in something like that. We ‑‑ our work force development centers in Kansas are under our Department of Commerce and so the department of commerce came to SILC and asked if we would help them with a training program for their work force development staff. So what I did was I went to our outreach work group and asked them, what material do you have that talks about services at centers for independent living provide? There is a lot of unemployment services that centers do. So the outreach group because that was one of their goals was to prepare these common generic, you know things that could be used, had a lot of information that I could then transfer over to the work force development training and put in their slides and then we wept one step further ‑‑ went one step further at the different regional work force development centers, I set up for a center staff person to come and actually present that information to the work force staff and then also answer any additional questions they might have and that has had great success because, you know in Kansas at least the centers and the work force development staff, they don't always commingle like they should it was always centers with the art or whatever but this kind of opened that door and also opened the door with the Department of Commerce and their work force staff to really lean on the IL network more and ask us more questions and have us be consultants and involve us more into those kinds of things Specifically the employment work group didn't necessarily have a distinct role in that piece of it, but it was probably staffed from that work group that were the ones that actually when and presented to the work force development centers for the training. I hope that answers your question.

>> Already, great examples. Thank you.

Next question comes from Jeremy. Did any of the work groups have other community partners outside of the IL network so those are good examples there with work force. Any examples that ya'll have there?

>> There were partners that came in at various times. Everyone I think increased their efforts to collaborate with local housing authorities. And a lot of them have community advisory councils. Some cities that have community development block grant money and home funds have advisory councils that determine how that funds ‑‑ how those funds will be used so we made efforts to become members of those kinds of organizations. Interfaith housing and Hutchison that funds housing repair and accessibility improvements. We had a lot of people come in and learn about what we do as well as understanding the scope of their grant and what geographical areas they served. So no one joined on an ongoing basis, but I think there were ‑‑ there was a lot of meaningful communication that occurred with a lot of other community resources throughout the years. Those are just a few examples.

>> Yeah, and on the transportation work group, I know that one of the universities in our state had been working on a similar thing with the providers and the intercounty transportation and all that and I know the transportation group did invite the University of Kansas and the person who was working on that grant to come in and work with them and help them listen to different things. But the employment group is probably where the SPIL work groups had the most outside community involvement and on an ongoing basis. We had members and still do from like the Kansas commission on developmental disabilities is a member of the employment work group. And I think the disability rights in Kansas had someone on the work group and then we also had Kansas house managed care organizations for our Medicaid sources. And so there were two members from different managed care organizations who came in and worked on the employment work group as well and still do to my knowledge.

>> Great. And similar question from Denise. So where does the VR fit into the employment work group?

>> I think that we do have a representative from vocational rehabilitation that sits in on the employment work group at least sometimes. In Kansas we have a program through rehabilitation that help the youth transition and it's called ‑‑ PRIETS pre‑employment services. And so. So I know the person who coordinated for VR has had some communication with the employment work group. I don't know that they are a regular member but they are somebody that we are looking at to possibly get on the SILC board as well.

>> Rebecca is wondering ‑‑ so if you don't have a SILC developed the way you are describing and coming to the table with the centers to develop the SPIL, you want to be effective, but you don't have all of these work groups in place. Where do you suggest we start? The plan, a ready, and effective ‑‑ to plan a ready effective SPIL.

>> I suggest that you ‑‑ that you have a meeting with all of the centers. I suggest you start out with IL network meetings and that's probably the most positive things that we have done in our state. When you have those type of meetings where you all come together and have open and honest discussions and don't have the fear of any outside entity that is granting you money coming in and overseeing that, it makes it a lot easier to open up. So my suggestion would be you need to get all of the center directors together in a room and needs to be face‑to‑face. And I know that's super difficult. But you have a discussion about how everybody needs to have equity in the SPIL and then you divide it up from there.

>> And those meetings seem to continue to take place quarterly or so, Kathy, is that right? There is always something that is very helpful to discuss in‑person to keep things moving.

>> The IL network meetings have been very organic. And we kind of have a meeting every two months. Every two to three months, because issues pop up in this state and when an issue pops up, I may not realize it or maybe the center directors don't realize a issue is popping up. But one of us does and somebody will say, I think we need another IL network meeting. It's not always me that calls them. Sometimes it's a center director will call me and say it's time.

>> Good. Great tips. So that's all the questions I see for this break so I will go ahead to slide 25 and turn it over to Deone Wilson.

>> Great. Some of that discussion we had is a good segue to the section that I'm going to talk about. Bringing the SILC and CILs together. And in Kansas we wanted to be efficient and make sure when we come together we are using that time to perform some of the required functions alongside the same time we are developmenting our relationships ‑‑ developing our relationships. We are required by law to develop the SPIL and when the centers were engaged in organizing and helping with the SPIL forums, what a great way for the center staff to learn more about the SPIL and how it works. Just personally, I would say ‑‑ and I was the CIL rep on the SILC many years. You get to know that SPIL if you are a part of helping write it. And at our center we really value that teamwork approach because if people are involved in the creation, then they understand it. They know how to ask good questions. They know what they can do to contribute to help reach the goals of the SPIL. And some of the by products of that is that our network just got stronger. We have the shared vision in this shared focus and that's one of the things that I have really enjoyed seeing materialize out of those work groups is that we are coming together and we are working on these goals and then we are taking the things that we learn in those work groups back to our local communities and making real change. It's been incredible to watch.

A couple of years ago in Kansas the centers and the SILC were required by our designated state unit to come together or ‑‑ designated ‑‑ excuse me to come together and produce a IL strategic plan. Something separate from the SPIL. At first we were ‑‑ we struggled with what's the purpose of this? We have the SPIL. We know what we are supposed to do. So at first when we were told we had to do this, you know how centers are. We get a little lost in it sometimes. We wanted to understand why we needed to use these resources to develop this long‑term plan. And that process, you know, it was expensive. There really wasn't a leader of the group so it floundered a little bit. There wasn't somebody a task master that was keeping things on track and there wasn't a way to be accountable to it. No way really that had a lot of teeth. We could report our progress during our quarterly reports, but other than that, that piece ‑‑ the planning, we didn't value it as much as maybe we could have or should have. But there were some good positive things that came out of it the centers did organize training for all of the center leadership on the super circular. If it was so technical and a lot of interpretation there. So when we can all get together and have training on things like that and ask questions at the same time and hear responses, then we all feel more confident when we go out to manage and do that type of reporting. And then another good thing that came out of that, the IL network planning when our DSE encouraged us to look for other funding sources, we received training on social enterprise. And if you are not aware of what that is, it's worth educating yourself about. We as a center set a goal in our strategic plan to raise $50,000 worth of unrestricted income through social enterprise. And at first I'm like, wow that seems like a clot of money but we did it. And I know a lot of other centers have done it as well. It took some real thinking outside the box and thinking about how to generate funding not through grants, but through utilizing the skills of your employees to raise funds that you can use to support your programs and services that aren't restricted. That was a very energizing experience for us. And I encourage all non‑profits to check out social enterprise as a way to raise funds.

So we went through that strategic planning and then it kind of stopped. There was some momentum starting and the SILC came in and brought us all back together to work on some ongoing issues that weren't identified or weren't prioritized as goals through that other planning that we did. And some of the things that we continue to meet and work on include reporting requirements. Our DSE had some very ‑‑ some very rigorous reporting requirements that we provided some feedback on. And as part of this process we are also rebuilding our relationship with the DSE. So it's been very positive. They listened to us and they are open to change and that's all because we come together as a network and presented these suggestions as a group. We also have made some recommendations on the auditing requirements. And we were talking about VR earlier. As centers, we wanted to deepen our relationship with VR and have more ‑‑ in order to receive more referrals and to be more active with them, I think they have a lot of resources that maybe we don't fully utilize because we ‑‑ our relationship isn't as deep as it should be and somehow we are working on a way for when a consumer comes into VR to receive those services, we were working on a way for the information for the VR counselors which at that point make a referral to the center for Independent Living. We are hopeful that will happen get more people into our doors and to help deepen that relationship with VR. Of course, in Kansas we all talk to each other and share advice and offer peer sharing. You know we may have a lot of differences but we have a lot of similarities, too. And we all are very open about ways that we have seen our inventive and new and creative in ways that we deliver our services from the center.

I think Bob has next slide.

>> Help with the new SILC authorities. The Kansas SILC asked CIL staff to participate in the planning and action steps for two ‑‑ for two of the new SILC authorities.

And systems advocacy is the first. The activity that occurred so far the SILCK director and CIL director executive director met with the Kansas special education director to increase awareness of all of our services, in particular our transition services that are available and being provided to youth. So this was a significant beginning to expand capacity to reach school administrators and teachers of transition age youth across the state. Many of us ‑‑ and ultimately youth with disabilities. Many of us have good relationships with our public schools, public and private schools. And have speaking engagements that involve consumers that there is a lot of peer interaction and information sharing and services are made available. But many of us don't have a very active ‑‑ we haven't been able to make end roads with all schools. Not every area has an active transition council and many schools don't even have transition counselors so it's very difficult to find to access teachers that will invite us into the classroom or make referrals to centers when they just see being a transition counselor as being a very part‑time position. We are hoping this will lead to greater interaction and communication with schools throughout the state as well as ‑‑ and able to reach youth and work with them and on goals that they have for transitioning to a life after school.

Slide 30.

Resource development. This committee has surveyed the CILs to establish what the funding needs are for the Independent Living network. And center director on this committee is providing the CIL perspective. Kathy may have additional information about what this committee has been working on that I am not aware.

>> I will say quickly this one is a difficult one for us as a SILC, but we have just take an look at what the centers would need extra funding for if we were able to do resource development for the entire network and then of course we looked at what would resource development look like for just the SILC itself. It was great to have the CIL perspective even though that person may not have been on our council at the time, it was a good perspective to keep big picture in mind.

>> Great. I will go ahead to slide 31.

>> I think it's worth doing an analysis what the problem or potential problems could be in when you are bringing the SILC and CILs together and what can happen when they aren't working together well. A big problem that we've ‑‑ we know of is centers aren't together and communicating well sometimes the legislators get mixed messages and it's confusing for them. Let's face it, a lot of legislators don't understand what senators do or who they are or what they accomplish ‑‑ what centers do or what they are or what they accomplish anyway, when they get mixed messages from the centers and it's that much easier for them to write us off. If we can all keep our eye on the big picture and come together on a ‑‑ on our priorities, and help focus the message, everyone, not just the centers but more importantly the individuals that access your services will benefit from that.

Another problem could be that relationship between the CILs and the DSE or the SILC and the DSE or all the way around. And that could be very challenging. And sometimes it's all puppies and kittens and other times it's met with a lot of challenges. And communication is hard sometimes as well. So focusing on trying to prevent problems and having good communication could really help prevent some things. I think another thing that's worth talking about and something that maybe separates us is that all centers and individuals and staff and the SILC and even the DSE we have different ways of doing things. A different approach is ‑‑ could cause some problems. There are some centers that are so great with their direct action and civil disobedience. There are some centers that are very good educator. Some people when they advocate they prefer writing letters or maybe they see the value in giving out there and building relationships with each other and their legislators. And sometimes people choose to go a professional route even and use paid lobbyists for things. I think it's important to recognize the difference and value the differences because everybody brings something different to it.

I think Kathy has the next slide.

>> So challenges. What happened when we don't get along. Well, if we don't all get along, we can lose state money. It's much better to have a unified voice because it is a stronger voice, first of all, and second of all, as was mentioned it's less confusing to the legislators to the state and to those entities. And that's one of the things we have seen is how it definitely benefited us that SILC and the CILs can all come together to the table when we need to and go to our DSE or go to a state agency and say, hey, you know here is the issue and here we are as a network ‑‑ not just a centers for independent living and not just the SILC, but as this large network that happened and you ‑‑ is it more powerful that way. And if you don't all get along, boy, things sure take a lot longer to get done. When you have consensus, it is much easier, much more efficient and much quicker to get things done. It was mentioned earlier the reporting that we do for the state of Kansas because most all of the centers, not all but most all of the centers and the SILC receive money through the state of Kansas whether it be part b or Social Security reimbursement or general state funds and they put extra requirements on this above and beyond what the Feds put on us. We have all come together on that and put in a list of recommendations to our DSE and said hey, things like reporting is not meaningful whatsoever. So let's do something different. And this way what we have done is we started understanding what the issue is in advance. And formulating what our solution is. What would benefit us the most before we ever take it to the state. Before we take it to our DSE. And then we have a solution. We come to them with a problem but we have a solution and so much time and so much easier and quicker to solve your problem. And I think that one thing we always need to re‑iterate is, the SPIL can be the tool to bring everybody together even when there are different agendas and this ‑‑ I mean if you really think about this, the SPIL is the blue print of what your state should be doing for IL. And if everybody has a piece in the SPIL, everybody has put their time and effort and blood, sweat and tears into it then they understand it better and they defend it better. And they come back to it. And we had to do that. We had issues. We had a center close. We had extra money come in. We had to come to the table and have difficult discussions about regional areas, core service areas, about money, how do we split it up? When everybody has a stake in the SPIL, it really does make a difference in how much better things can be and how much quicker things can be done. And then that is it on the slide but I do remember a couple of other things I wanted to say really quick. I'm very big into how does this SILC add value to the IL network? And some of the ways we have done that as a SILC is we ‑‑ for these SPIL work groups, SILC pays for the conference calling option. So you know either meet once a month or once every other money or a quarter or whatever and so SILC pays for that conference call line. And that saves money. It's not a ton of money but it definitely save the money. And another thing that we do as a SILC is help the SPIL work groups is when they have a housing conference and they want to do a booth because they want to get the information out there to a large group of people that are not in the disability field that are not in the disability community. People like builders and public policy makers and stuff like that, so SILC will pay for the booth because it's hard for CILs to split $150 ten ways. That's ridiculous. That's where the SILC has come in and added value.

And that is it.

>> Great. All right, that is almost it. Here we are on slide 33 and final Q&A. We have plenty of time. It's ten after and we have all the time in the world for your questions. So please let us know what else we can offer today to help you connect the dots and make changes in your states. So we've got a few questions that I will begin with. Just a reminder, I know I'm like a broken record but I rather do it too much and not enough. You can ask questions on the Q&A feature on zoom. On the chat on the full screen CART or if not any one of those options work for you, you are welcome to e‑mail me. I will keep an eye on all of those. Okay, first question, actually a series of just comments and affirmations from Shea in Arkansas. Shea shares, this is more of a statement but I think it's great you guys mentioned your start of expanding capacity within your schools. We are hopeful here in Arkansas we will have the opportunity that opportunity to gain this year. I was nearly elected the little rock school district PTA council President. Congratulations. I just appointed to that board the parent and family engagement coordinator. One of our goals is to reach parents of children with disability so they can live independently when they become adults. And she says she adds, this will provide parents and educator an opportunity to learn about our centers and how they work to help transition youth with disabilities. I know a lot of you know Shea if you do not, she is the executive director of the Arkansas. Thank you for sharing that. And how true that is. This is such a need and an opportunity right now to support young people that are in transition as a new core service for centers and there could be a role for the SILC there as well.

Anything you want to add, Kathy, or the rest of you?

>> Go ahead.

>> And this is kind of a side bar but when she mentioned that she was just added to the school board, there is a wonderful program out there called leaders without limits that I would encourage people to check out. It is training and support. We used it in our peer support groups teaching individuals with disabilities about how to become involved at a local level or even regional or state or national levels by learning how to be board members and influence policies and decisions through that avenue. I know it's a side bar but I wanted to promote that program. It's really great.

>> Kathy?

>> Shea brings up a good point. You know that's not a usual collaboration that we think of when we think of Independent Living or the IL network but those are the kind of things we need to start looking at. That's the out of box thinking that we will have to do. So, yeah, one of the things we are doing in Kansas is we are for the SILC we are looking into the possibility of reaching out to the schools or transition coordinators or the disability offices at different universities across the state. And asking them if they have anybody who needs to do ‑‑ like my kid, he is starting high school and they have to do community service. It's a requirement to graduate. Well, are there any students with disabilities that need to fulfill that requirement? Would they be interested in being on one of the SILC work groups? We know that maybe not SILC council. Maybe not what they would be looking for, but the work groups, you don't have to be a board member to be on that. We meet like once a month and it would be a great opportunity. So we are looking at more and more things like that and so I really do think we need to expand and look outside of our IL box for more ways to collaborate.

>> I will add, using our advocacy context. Because many center staff are involved with school districts during their ADA self‑evaluation and transition plan. And many are also updating those now. It's been a number of years since they were first required. Updates, and interacting with ADA coordinators. Anyway you have contacts using those relationships to build and make available all of our services.

>> A quick correction. I said ‑‑ I misspoke. Shea is a PTA council board President. I said school board so sorry if I misspoke. I was going too fast there.

>> Great.

>> And Kathy, next question looks like it's for you from Rebecca. Can you offer some unique suggestions for building SILC membership quickly when you dwindled down to a couple of members and the SILC doesn't have the best reputation in your state.

>> Well, yeah. You know, that's kind of what I walked into when I became the executive director because of the audits and what had happened in the state of Kansas. We weren't portrayed necessarily as the best organization. You know, not because we weren't, because we were, but you know everybody has a perception and once it gets into the media things can go awry real quick. So what I would suggest is reaching out to the other councils in your area, in your state. I reached out to the Kansas commission on developmental disabilities. I reached out to the Kansas commission on deaf and hard‑of‑hearing. You know I'm asking them for members that would like to branch out as well. Universities are another great one to reach out to. And they are usually a lot more willing to provide help and assistance. But quite honestly it's just going to come down to who do you know as an executive director that is in the disability field or has a disability and you think would be good board member. There are several times when I reached out to people that I have worked with in the past or people that are ‑‑ have been peers of mine in the past or colleagues and I asked them do you have any desire? Here is what we are doing. Here ways we need to do. When you don't have the best reputation in your state, it is difficult. It's kind of a rebuilding period. And that's another good way to sell it. That these people would be part of that refocusing of your SILC and getting it back on the track you want it on. Quite honestly, I reach out to a lot of people I know and ask them.

>> I would add that sometimes it does just take time and doing good work and making sure that people are aware of the good work that's happening. And if you come up with goals that you need a specific skill set, it's good to reach out to professionals and say, hey, look, this is what our SILC is working on now. These positive outcomes for transportation, we could really use your expertise and as a person with a disability, we think you would make a great SILC member. Sometimes it takes a little time but once you ‑‑ you're providing great outcomes and you are doing good work, then it's easier to get people to want to be a part of that.

>> Great tips. And that's true. It's probably not going to be quick. It takes a long time. Might find a couple of people quickly but it's a full time job to keep the SILC fully constituted. We had ‑‑ I will share the link here in the chat. So we just did a webinar on SILC recruitment and orientation last year. We try to do them every couple of years. The most recent was with folks from New York and California and just a great webinar. So that link, it will take you to the archive training. It's a 90 minute webinar like this one. You can view that with the Liz and Brad. They had some great tips for how they have done it in their state. And they talked openly about the challenges they had. It's difficult to do you know that. Check that out.

So I don't see additional questions. Let's just give a last call here and we will give about 15 seconds to see if any questions roll in. We still have ten minutes so the time is yours if you like to use it today, folks and type your questions in the Q&A feature here on Zoom. Or on the chat.

Just a reminder while we are waiting, when you close the webinar today, the evaluation form will come up. I hope you take a few minutes to fill it out and it's easy to complete and we would like to have your thoughts on today's webinar. Let us know what you think.

And if you don't have time to do it today, I think we all know it will be really difficult to go back to it. If you don't fill it out now if you need to go, that eval link that you see here on slide 33, even though this is not a live link, it was included this the confirmation e‑mail I send to you. And that confirmation e‑mail you can open that up if you prefer to do it tomorrow morning, for instance, you can click on that link in the confirmation e‑mail and fill out the eval that way.

I don't see additional questions so we will wrap up the call. The archive version of today's webinar will be available within 48 hours and usually much sooner. It will be hosted on ILRUs website. I want to thank you for taking the time to join us today. I hope this has been helpful. I certainly used a lot and I know it's not easy to take an hour and a half for these trainings and I appreciate that all of you did that. I also want to thank all of our presenters today. You did a great job. You brought a lot of clear and real world examples and I am happy you were able to build a strong network in Kansas. Thank you so much for your time and for the presentation.

Look, we've got one question that snuck in. Let's go ahead. We certainly have the time. Do most IL networks consist of only CILs and SILCs? I will toss that to you, Kathy. Is that true in Kansas and what other partners ‑‑

>> Well, no. I don't think they have to only consist of those two entities. You know, before we at the IL network this was the CILs, the SILC, the DSE and anything else really needed ‑‑ related to IL funding. However from my understanding, the IL network can be described or detailed in your SPIL. So your IL network can have more people in it than that I don't think it has to is my understanding. And in Kansas it has really worked well and benefited us to have this SILC and the CIL be what we consider an IL network. Because sometimes and not everywhere but sometimes when you add extra entities in there, that ‑‑ you don't always have some of the open and honest communication that you could get. And so we.

Basically, we take everything from the IL network if we have problems or issues ‑‑ [inaudible] so the SILC is getting all of the information. It's just that they don't have some of the ‑‑ the private conversations as you will.

>> That's great and I will add for anybody on the phone that is just getting into IL or maybe not as familiar that half of the states around the country have IL associations as well. That's an entity that outside of the CILs and the SILC that would certainly be an important partner and a strong IL network.

Shea shares in Arkansas it includes the SILC, all of the CILs, and the division of services for the blind in Arkansas rehab services who receive part B funding. Thank you for sharing, Shea.

So that completes all of our questions for today. So again I want to thank all of you and thank you so much to our presenters. Don't forget to fill out the evaluation. If you have any questions to come up whether it's later today or six months from now, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to help. My. Thanks again, everybody. Have a great afternoon. Bye‑bye.