

IL-NET

CIL-NET · SILC-NET

Effective Rural Outreach: Using the Concerns Report Method as a Tool for Change

August 15, 2013

Presenters:

Mike Mayer

Tom Seekins

Plan for Session

- Review some background on rural strategies for extending IL to un-served small towns and rural areas
- Highlight the Concerns Report Method
- Provide some real world examples from the perspective of a CIL director



Independent Living



- IL philosophy and the IL model are among the most significant developments in health and human services of the last 50 years.
- But not everyone has had access to these developments.

Rural America

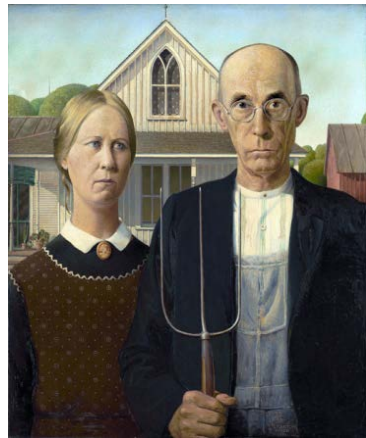
- There are 32,070 towns with populations of 10,000 or less
 - Equal to top 97 cities—about 57 million
- 2,049 rural counties
- Residents of up to 40% of counties—most rural—are outside a CIL service area



Some Basic Rural Dimensions

Potential Strengths

- Commitment to place
- Socially tightly linked
- Independent spirit of self-help and mutual aid
- Socially tightly linked systems



Potential Problems

- Low population density
- Distance and isolation
- Thinner economic margins
- Older Infrastructure
- Fewer services
- Inequity of resource allocations
- Urban policy bias

The Rural Vision

- Vibrant small towns and rural communities— aided by CILS—in which all residents participate and enjoy a sense of belonging
- How do you extend the IL model into un-served or underserved areas?



Many Pathways



- Take as many as you need
- Be sure that they fit the local values

OUTREACH Approaches

- Mentored Satellite
- Branch Office
- Outreach Office
- Out-stationing
- Circuit Rider
- Local Support Groups and Contacts
- Surrogate Providers
- Virtual CIL
- Cooperatives
- Community Education and Awareness
- Community Development

Rural Independent Living is Community Development —A Strategy Using All Approaches

- IL Emphasizes the Environment
- Environment Means Community
- Advocacy to Change the Environment Means Advocacy to Change the Community
- There are many approaches and tools for community development.

Tools People Use



RTC: Rural Creates Tools for Building Rural
Communities

Rural Community Development and Independent Living

- Rural Economic Development and Business creation
- Rural transportation
- Advocating for community accessibility with GRACE and CHARM
- Rural Consumer Advocacy
- Self Employment
- Disability Counts
- Living Well with a Disability health promotion

Questions and Answers

Definitions of Community

IL Emphasizes the Environment

Environment Means Community

Community is people who participate in activities in a shared place.



RTC:Rural Creates Tools for Building Community

Disability Concerns in Rural America

- People with disabilities living in rural communities have many of the same concerns as their urban counterparts but experience them in distinct and different ways.
 - Example of transportation
 - Rural = No public transportation
 - Urban = Inconvenient schedules

Rural Community Advocacy is Different

We are all in it together.



Rural America Context

Unlike Larger Cities, Formal and Informal Systems in Rural Communities are Tightly Linked

- A change in one is likely to affect others
- Members of rural communities take their time to consider the many implications of any change
- Outsiders may see this as “backward”
- The truth is that represents wisdom
- Rural communities tend to be “small C conservative”—to protect their community

Community Development



Involves building partnerships to

- Identify issues of importance around which you can organize
- Create an agenda
- Contribute to the community

1 QUESTION and 2 PRINCIPLES

QUESTION

- What are some methods that might be used to expand the services of centers for independent living into currently underserved areas—especially rural areas?

PRINCIPLES

- There are many paths to any goal.
- Successful change has many parents.

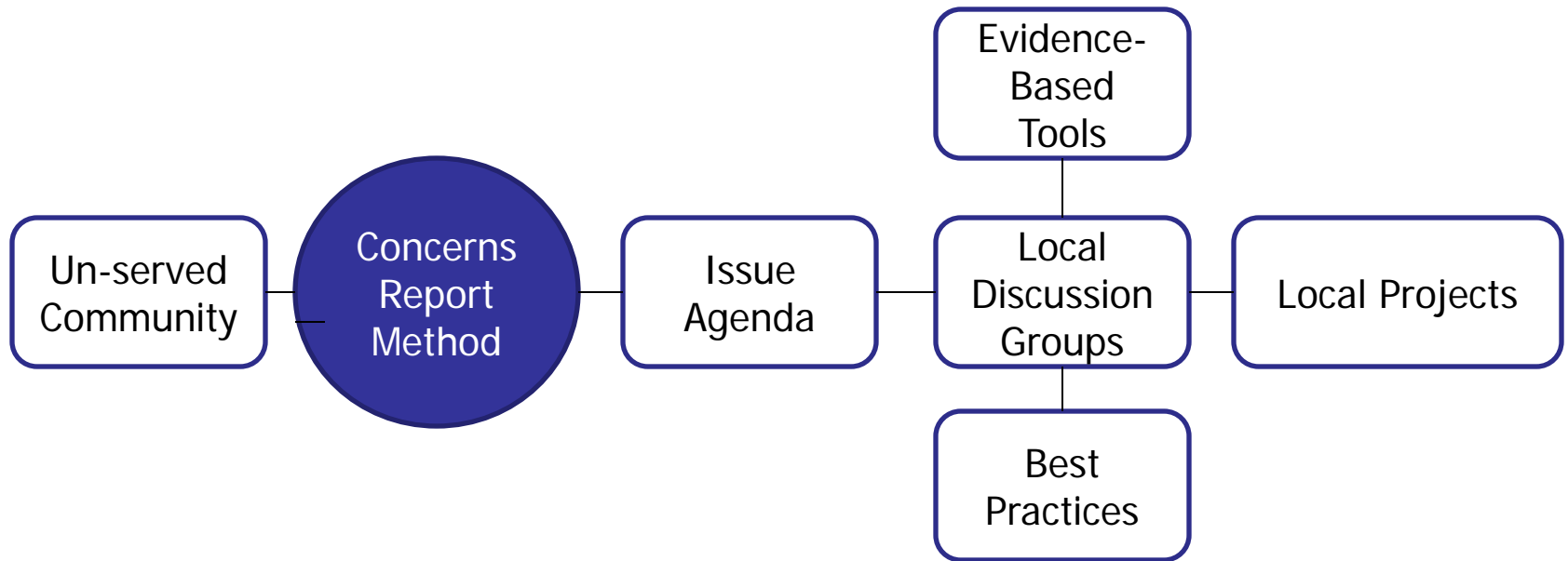
Questions and Answers

Concerns Report Method (CRM)

CRM is an agenda building tool that involves *local* residents in assessing their environment and building an agenda for community improvement.

It has been used by Low Income and Wealthy Neighborhood Associations; Mental Health Advocates; Schools; and CILs around the world to organize and to achieve their goals.

CRM Flowchart



Context	Assessment	Agenda Formation	Assessment, Planning & Commitment	Implementation and Monitoring & Feedback
----------------	-------------------	-------------------------	--	---

Concerns Report Process

- Local Steering Committee
- Creates a Concerns Menu
- Community Representatives Select, Edit, Create Items
- Concerns Items are Organized in a Unique Survey Format
- Concerns Survey is Widely Distributed to Involve As Many as Possible
- Survey Responses Analyzed to Identify Strengths and Problems
- Form and Agenda
- Community Discussion Groups Create Commitment
- Plan Derived from Discussions
- Plan Widely Circulated and Presented to Build Awareness and Support
- Projects Implemented
- Achievements Noted and Momentum Builds for More

Sample Concerns Menu Items

- A. The important places in your community are accessible.
- B. Your community has enough accessible houses and apartments.
- C. You can get where you need to go both in and out of town.
- D. You have access to health-care provider knowledgeable about disability.
- E. Employers treat you fairly.

Sample Survey Items

	How Important is it to you that ...				How satisfied are you that...			
	Not Important		Very Important		Not Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
The important places in your community are accessible.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Your community has enough accessible houses and apartments.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
You can get where you need to go both in and out of town.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3

Sample Meeting Agenda

Potential Strengths			Potential Problems		
	Average Importance	Average Satisfaction		Average Importance	Average Satisfaction
Your community has accessible houses and apartments.	89%	82%	The important places in your community are accessible.	92%	62%
You have access to health-care provider knowledgeable about disability.	89%	81%	Employers treat you fairly.	96%	68%
			You can get where you need to go.	92%	73%

Sample Report with Assignments

ISSUES – SOLUTIONS - RESPONSIBILITY					
Your community is accessible. (98% - 68%)	Responsible Parties				
	County	City	Business	CIL	OTHER
1. Develop and implement a program for routine monitoring the public accessibility of the communities in the county.	X	X		X	
2. Train and engage a consumer observer corps to conduct the monitoring.				X	X
3. Provide technical assistance to businesses and agencies on how to improve accessibility.				X	
4. Create a regular Community Accessibility Report Card that is routinely “sent home.”	X	X			
5. Create a community honor roll and award for achievement in accessibility for different categories of places (e.g., education, health care, retail business, etc.)			X		X

Establish IL in Un-served Rural Areas by Facilitating Working Together to Build Sustainable Community for Everyone



Questions and Answers

Summit Independent Living Center, Inc.

Concerns Report Method for Community Advocacy & Rural CIL Branch Office Development

Background and Overview

- Summit ILC serves 7 primarily rural counties in western Montana—19,616 square miles with a population of 304,508 (31% of MT total—2010 census)
- Summit founded in 1981 in Missoula, Montana as a department of Community Medical Center
- Standalone CIL since 1988
- Service area grew from 1 county to 4 counties and then to current 7 county service area

Background and Overview, cont'd.

- Summit awarded a grant through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation “Improving Service Systems for People with Disabilities” program in 1991
- RWJF grant—one-year planning grant & three-year implementation funding
- Prior to RWJF provided services in Ravalli, Lake & Flathead Counties on an outreach basis—typically 1 trip/month
- BOD commitment to expand services to rural counties
- Utilized the Concerns Report Method as a key element in the establishment of 3 branch offices in 1992

Concerns Report Method Goals

- CRM is a valuable tool to help CILs assess community needs and lay the groundwork for successful expansion of IL services and advocacy efforts
- Develop local system change initiatives identified, prioritized and supported by residents of targeted communities
- Develop buy-in and support for new branch offices to serve rural communities in our service area
- Promote new/expanded IL services available through the branch offices

Concerns Report Method Goals, cont'd.

- Overall focus on improving service systems & independent living options for people with disabilities
- Ensure the process is consumer-driven and based on IL principles
- Expand network of peer advocates, community partners and allied organizations in rural areas
- Develop financial resources to support expanded services

Concerns Report Method—Survey Summary

- Survey conducted in 1991
- Missoula, Lake, Ravalli & Flathead Counties in western Montana
- Two separate survey questionnaires were used to get perspectives of both consumers and service providers

Consumer Survey

- 258 of 1421 questionnaires mailed were returned (18% return rate)
- Employment of respondents
- Levels of health and independence
- Relative strengths of communities
- Relative problems/barriers encountered
- Knowledge and current use of Summit services
- Consumer interest in various services and participation in advocacy efforts to address problems

Provider Survey

- 84 of 250 service providers (34% return rate)
- Disability populations served and types of service provided
- Satisfaction with existing service system
- Gaps in services
- Interest in working collaboratively to address systemic problems
- Interest in potentially purchasing services from Summit

Survey Results & Next Steps

- Reports prepared by County for both consumer & service provider surveys
- Overall summary report for all 4 counties—both consumer and service provider surveys
- Town hall meetings held in communities throughout 4 county service area to discuss survey results and recruit participants for Planning and Action Committees to address identified problems

Planning and Action Committees

- Set up a consumer-driven PAC in each of the 4 target counties
- Members—consumers, advocates, service providers, local city and county officials, CIL staff, and peer advocates
- Reviewed survey results and identified priorities for local system change initiatives
- Met regularly to develop strategies to implement targeted community initiatives and collaborated with Summit and other agencies as coalitions were built
- Helped determine best location for each of the 3 Summit branch offices
- Helped recruit and interview candidates for a full-time county coordinator for each branch office
- Helped steer, promote and support the branch offices the first few years of their operation

System Change Initiatives Addressed

- Improve accessibility of public facilities
- Strengthen enforcement of accessible parking laws
- Expand outdoor recreation opportunities for people with disabilities
- Develop additional transportation resources
- Promote affordable and accessible housing
- Improve hospital transition services
- Others...

Outcomes

- Significantly increased the number of consumers served in rural areas
- 3 branch offices still in operation today
- Extensive education, training and technical assistance on ADA, including development of Title II self-evaluation and transition plans for several communities & many accessibility consultations
- Improved access of state and federal outdoor recreation sites
- State building code statute amended in 1997 to strengthen enforcement of exterior access requirements (parking, curb ramps, etc).

Outcomes, cont'd.

- Transportation identified as a high priority by the Planning & Action Council in Ravalli County
- PAC formed the first official Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) recognized by the Montana Department of Transportation for purposes of rural transit program development in Ravalli County

Outcomes, cont'd. 2

Through the Transportation Advisory Council, Summit and the Ravalli County Council on Aging collaborated with other partner agencies to expand transit services for seniors and people with disabilities

- Developed the Five-Year Transportation Development Plan required for receipt of 5311 funding for rural transit operations
- Secured matching funds from the county through grassroots legislative advocacy
- Wrote a proposal for 5311 funding that was awarded by the MT Department of Transportation and launched the "Bitterroot Bus" rural transit program in Ravalli County
- Continued ongoing efforts over the years to improve funding and coordination of transit services in Ravalli County
- Transportation Advisory Committee meets regularly each quarter 20+ years after founding by the original Summit Planning & Action Committee

Tips and Strategies

- Tailor the Concerns Report survey to your CIL's unique goals, needs and service area
- Build on existing contacts in targeted communities if available, particularly consumers and peer advocates
- Don't forget to include decision-makers and the movers and shakers in your community
- Tackle problems/issues you have a reasonable chance of accomplishing

Tips and Strategies, cont'd.

- Be prepared to follow through—the process is labor intensive and changes can take a long time to accomplish
- Take into consideration the unique opportunities and challenges of each community—local buy-in is critical
- Celebrate small victories along the way!
- Keep your finger on the pulse in your service area as community needs change over time and your priorities may need to evolve (consider needs assessments periodically)

Questions and Answers

For More Information

- Mike Mayer, Executive Director, Summit ILC
 - 700 SW Higgins, Suite 101, Missoula, MT 59803
 - mmayer@summitilc.org
 - 406-728-1630 (V/TT)
- Tom Seekins, Director of Research at the Rural Institute
 - tom.seekins@mso.umt.edu
 - (406) 243-2654

Wrap Up and Evaluation

Please *click the link below* to complete your evaluation of this program:

<https://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/12291g540d7>

CIL-NET Attribution

Support for development of this training was provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration under grant number H132B120001. No official endorsement of the Department of Education should be inferred. Permission is granted for duplication of any portion of this PowerPoint presentation, providing that the following credit is given to the project: **Developed as part of the CIL-NET, a project of the IL-NET, an ILRU/NCIL/APRIL National Training and Technical Assistance Program.**