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SILC Recruitment and Orientation

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Presenters:

Liz Pazdral

Brad Williams

What You Will Learn

- Effective strategies to strengthen SILC member recruitment processes that will result in committed, highly engaged council members, while reducing turnover.
- Elements of highly effective member orientation sessions that result in greater knowledge of the IL field and a higher comfort level among members as they begin their new roles.
- Effective “best practice” tools and techniques for improving the ongoing support and development of SILC members.

Lessons Learned from New York

Brad Williams

New York SILC Recruitment Overview

- The SILC developed an annual process to consistently address its recruitment needs. An effective annual recruitment process is needed because:
 - SILC members are public officers and full participation from all members is needed to ensure a quorum and to take action on business (as defined in a State Attorney General opinion).
 - It is the best way to ensure seamless succession of members without gaps. While we do not experience the typical Gubernatorial delays of other SILCs, we still have to ensure an orderly process with our appointment authority – the NYS Regents.

New York SILC Recruitment Overview (con't)

- Lack of planning for your recruitment needs will result in a council that is not diverse, lacks expertise, and has members who aren't active and engaged.

Annual Recruitment Process — Council Tracking Chart



- The council uses an Excel spreadsheet to track significant information about its current members.
- For each member, it tracks: Employed by (State/CIL, neither), appointment category, term start/end dates, voting/non-voting, disability (y/n), race/ethnicity, gender, state/region, other (youth, senior, expertise).
- When members term off or leave, it identifies vacant positions, upcoming vacancies, and members who need to be reappointed.

Annual Recruitment Process — Council Tracking Chart, cont'd.

- It also calculates percentages of total council members with a disability and total voting members with a disability.

Annual Recruitment Process — Recruitment Committee

- The committee typically consists of the Executive Director, SILC Secretary (officer), DSE liaison, and other interested members.
- The committee confirms the upcoming vacancies and needs of the council, solicits individuals for the vacancies, reviews the candidate's materials (to prioritize top applicants), conducts group telephone interviews, and recommends individuals for appointment to the council (and reappointments).
(April-August)

Annual Recruitment Process — Recruitment Committee, cont'd.

- With the Executive Committee, the Recruitment Committee will support the orientation of new members. (March)

Annual Recruitment Process — New Member Solicitation

- After the Recruitment Committee meets and confirms the vacancy and needs of the council, the information is used in a solicitation notice to encourage individuals to apply.
- The solicitation provides basic background information about the council along with expectations. It requests applicants respond by a deadline date with a resume and application form (which asks for contact information, response to three questions, and two references). (May-June)

Annual Recruitment Process— New Member Solicitation, cont'd.

- The solicitation is distributed to a variety of lists, social networks, and posted on the council website.
- Stakeholders are asked to do the same for deeper distribution. LinkedIn is an effective tool for board member recruitment.
- Current council members then take the solicitation notice each year and send it out to individuals they know, encouraging them to apply. Council members often get into discussions about expectations and inform potential members that it is a competitive process.

Annual Recruitment Process— New Member Solicitation, cont'd. 2

New Member Solicitation (con't)

- It is important to send correspondence to all individuals throughout the process to keep them informed.

Examples of materials referenced:

- Solicitation notice:

http://www.nysilc.org/images/Solicitation_Notice.docx

- Application form:

http://www.nysilc.org/images/Application_Form.docx

Annual Recruitment Process— Candidate Review Process

- After the deadline, the SILC office compiles complete applications and schedules the next committee meeting.
- Recruitment Committee members review the materials and identify the top candidates, giving consideration to the vacancy and diversity needs of the council. (mid-July)
- The top candidates are invited to participate in telephone interviews in early August.

Annual Recruitment Process— Candidate Review Process, cont'd.

- Interview day(s) and times are scheduled with the candidates. (early August)
- The committee attempts to reach consensus on appointment recommendations at the end of the last telephone interview. A follow up email may be used to reach consensus.
- Ultimately, the committee must vote and agree on a slate of new member appointments (and reappointments) to recommend to the Executive Committee. (early to mid-August)

Annual Recruitment Process— Candidate Review Process, cont'd. 2

- If the committee is not satisfied with a candidate based on the telephone interviews, they can go back to the candidate pool and interview another candidate until they find a replacement.
- The SILC office creates a document based on the Recruitment Committee's appointment recommendations for the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee considers the recommendations at their next meeting. (Late August-early September)

Annual Recruitment Process— Candidate Review Process, cont'd. 3

- The Executive Committee often reviews, discusses and approves the recommendations made by the Recruitment Committee. (mid-September)
- The SILC office creates a full appointment packet and sets up a meeting to review it with the DSE. (late September).
- It should be noted that both the Executive Committee and DSE can object to a recommended appointee. If this happens, it can lead to a vacancy that is filled later in the year or next recruitment cycle.

Annual Recruitment Process— Candidate Review Process, cont'd. 4

- The DSE takes the information from the packet and converts it into a Regents item. The SILC's appointments and reappointments are scheduled for a Regents meeting near the end of the year. (November-December)
- Letters are sent out by the DSE to confirm the appointments by the NYS Regents. New members start January 1st of the relevant year.
- Orientation of new members takes place the afternoon before the first full council meeting. (March)

Annual Recruitment Process— Candidate Review Process, cont'd. 5

Examples of materials referenced:

- Telephone interview materials:

http://www.nysilc.org/images/Telephone_Interphone_Materials.docx

- Sample correspondence:

http://www.nysilc.org/images/Sample_Correspondence.docx

New Member Orientation

- NYSILC holds its new member orientation the afternoon before the first full council meeting each year. (March)
- The orientation is held at the hotel where the full council meeting will take place. The orientation manual is sent out in advance so new members have a chance to review the materials.
- The Executive Director runs the orientation with the assistance of Executive Committee and Recruitment Committee members. It is designed to be a small group session.

New Member Orientation, cont'd.

- The orientation manual reviews the relevant sections of the Rehabilitation Act, open meetings law, the importance of quorum, reviews the agenda and how the meeting is run, operating structure (by-laws and policies, organizational structure and committees), board member duties, conflict of interest, travel reimbursement, fiduciary responsibilities, council history/impact, DSE role, and an overview of the SPIL.
- It takes approximately 3-4 hours to review the materials. More of an overview is provided. A lot of time is provided to allow for discussion and questions. Required forms are reviewed and completed.

New Member Orientation, cont'd. 2

- The council does not utilize a mentoring program for new members. However, dinner is provided at the end of the orientation to offer an opportunity to socialize and to get to know each other. A welcome is extended at the start of the full council meeting. Attempts are made during lunch at the full council meetings to socialize and get members to network with each other.
- NYSILC will support and encourage new members to participate in any additional educational opportunities that will enhance their knowledge.

New Member Orientation, cont'd. 3

Examples of materials referenced:

- New member orientation manual:

http://www.nysilc.org/images/NYSILC_New_Member_Orientation_Manual.doc

Lessons Learned from California

Liz Pazdral

Questions to ask your SILC to build inclusiveness



What can we do in our SILC to build participation and leadership from diverse communities?

In *Inclusiveness at Work: How to Build Inclusive Nonprofit Organizations*, Katherine Pease suggests a few questions your board can ask itself:

- Are people of all ethnicities, races, religions, gender identities, ages comfortable serving on the SILC?
- Does the SILC consider issues relating to all when it sets policies and makes decisions for the organization?
- What could the SILC do differently to become more inclusive and welcoming?
- What could the SILC do differently to address the needs of different communities?

Tools and techniques: Membership or Recruitment Audits

- Boardsource
 - <https://www.boardsource.org>
- Georgia Center for Nonprofits system: Strategic Needs Table, Current Board Inventory, Recruit Attributes Chart
 - <http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Hiring-Nonprofit-Leaders/Recruiting-Board-Members/Right-from-the-Start-What-Your-Board-Needs.aspx#.VamQXEZWKfM>
- National Council of Nonprofits:
 - <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/finding-the-right-board-members-your-nonprofit>

Tools and techniques: Membership or Recruitment Audits, cont'd.

- New Hampshire Center for Nonprofits Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire
<http://www.nhnonprofits.org/?q=node/393>
- Blue Avocado, Board Café, "*Ditch Your Board Composition Matrix.*"
<http://www.blueavocado.org/node/762>

Other Recruitment Strategies

- Diversity Plan
- Champions: you already have Council members who represent multiple demographic groups. Engage them in the social justice strategy of building leadership.
- Targeted Recruitment
 - Individuals: Create a “Hot List”
 - Organizations: Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders with Disabilities
- Outreach to missing demographic groups
 - Email to Traumatic Brain Injury List Serve

Other Recruitment Strategies, cont'd.

- Attending Events
- Networking
- Being parts of other organizations
- Active community member
- Getting to know your ILCs and their members
- City and county council meetings
- Making presentations

Building Group Identity AND a Diverse SILC



- Equal status among group members
 - Flat leadership structure
 - Multiple opportunities for leadership
- Ice Breakers and Team Building
 - Strive for Interaction that is intimate, individualized, nonstereotypical, and interdependent – making similarities among participants salient.
- Peer mentoring program
 - California SILC members designed a peer mentoring project where longer-term members are matched with new based on interests and geography
 - Called a “Piece of P.I.E.” (prepare, inform, and engage)

SILC Peer Mentoring Program

Designed to make new members feel welcome and included. New members will be paired with more experienced members.

The goal of the program is to:

1. Increase fellowship and camaraderie between new and existing members;
2. Educate new members of the role of council members;
3. Expand the knowledge of new SILC members about the existing state of Independent Living and its future.

SILC Peer Mentoring Program, cont'd.

To make the program successful, participants:

1. have at least one meal together at the quarterly meeting;
2. check in monthly via telephone;
3. participate in the quarterly Mentee / Mentor breakfast on the 2nd day of the SILC meeting.

Engagement through Representation

- If you are recruiting based on strategic planning, your new members will be derived from groups your state is increasing services to.
 - Your SPIL probably also includes projects that your new members could join to benefit their group
 - California SILC supports the Youth Leadership Forum
 - *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* projects
 - 2013 White Paper: *The Deaf Community: Range and Gaps in Services and the Role of Independent Living Centers for People with Hearing Loss*

Contact Information and Evaluation Survey

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